Week ending August 9 1947

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Saturday Afternoon

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Jill's getting ideas . . . this year she's going to choose her very own birthday book. The one she wants is in Smith's, but it will have to wait till Saturday afternoon, when Father can come too. And he *must* decide before he escapes into the lending library. Mother's almost hopeless, unless you can steer her past the fashion papers. . . .

Jill's family, like thousands of others, have formed the habit of dropping in at Smith's. They like the bright surroundings and friendly atmosphere of the up-to-the-minute shop where nothing is too much trouble. And they know that the W.H.S. service, built up on more than a century and a half's experience, is second to none.

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AUGUST 9, 1947 VOL. 82 NO. 2145

Respectable Cheats!

JOHN BULL HAS REPEATEDLY attacked the rent cheats who in various clever ways exploit the shortage of homes. They prey on all classes alike, though much has now been done to cut their claws.

There is another sort of housing trick—that of the man with a house to sell, who asks a fantastic price because he expects that somebody who cannot get a house any other way will, in desperation, pay up.

Examples of this cheating—for it is no less, although often practised by respectable people who would be horrified to hear themselves described as profiteers—can be seen in every town in Britain.

Houses which, prewar, cost less than £1,000 to build, now change hands for between £3,000 and £4,000. For a typical £2,000 house anything over £5,000 is demanded. Tumbledown places in the country, obsolete and once unsaleable, are advertised for sums which would once have bought mansions.

Now, these are not reasonable price increases, in keeping with the general rise in the cost of living. They represent rank profiteering.

They are made possible only because rented houses are so hard to find that the family man with a few savings is sometimes forced to consider buying a house outright.

To pay the present prices generally means putting a load of debt on a man's back for which he will never get real value.

We have rent control, and many safeguards for tenants. Why not price control for the luckless buyers of houses? It could be brought in, and it should be.

How To Get The Goods?

THE MIDDLE OF THE HOLIDAYS may seem a bad time to discuss work—but a lot of decisions are being made this month which will affect us when our summer playdays are over.

We all know by this time, unless we are deaf, blind or daft, that only greater production of everything can save us from bankruptcy and want.

There are many recipes for improving production. Arthur Deakin, of the Transport Workers, plumps for direction of labour into the most essential industries. We had that in the war. We don't want it in the peace.

The only justification for this kind of industrial conscription is that it should deliver the goods. But would it? Would semi-slave workers—for surely a man who cannot change his job is a slave?—give George Isaacs and Stafford Cripps the figures they want?

It seems unlikely. But a decision on this is soon to be made.

And there is to be a decision about incentive payments—payment by results, or whatever you like to call the system. That is much more likely to succeed.

The unions have fought shy of payment by results because of past industrial struggles. Today things are different. And unions do not exist to see that lazy men get paid as much as busy men. By all means let us have payment by results.

A third decision, to have staggered hours of work to spread the electricity load, has already been taken. Now the details are being worked out. A lot of firms and workers will complain that they are getting a raw deal. But no deal would be so raw as last winter inflicted on us—when all industry stopped.

Has anyone else any big ideas for increasing production? We shall need them all this coming winter.

True Road To Safety

A MAN CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT a heart. It doesn't matter what fine legs and stomach and teeth he has—if the heart stops, the man stops.

The Ruhr is the heart of Germany. Without the coal and steel and the rest of the Ruhr's output, Germany is as good as dead. That is why the current talks on the Ruhr's future are so important.

The British want to keep German industries going as far as possible. Otherwise our zone costs us more. The American attitude is much the same—with a wary eye on Russia.

But the French think mainly of what might happen when one day if Germany recovers her old strength the Ruhr once more starts turning out the steel of guns and bombs.

So they want the future Germany to be deprived of the Ruhr. Anything which does that will have French support. It might be a French mandate. It might be a weak but separate State of Western Germany. It might be an internationalized Ruhr.

You can understand France's fears. Germany has conquered her twice and invaded her a third time in the last eighty years.

But, in spite of that, the French will have to be told that the Ruhr stays German. Otherwise there cannot be what the experts call a "balanced economy" east of the Rhine. No balanced economy means no prosperity. No prosperity means expense to Germany's neighbours—and the breeding of another war.

The way to make France safe is not to make Germany into a dismembered slum, but to make the United Nations work, to kill suspicion and stop the atomic armaments race.

Let The People Know

SINCE, EARLY THIS YEAR, the Government issued its Economic Survey for 1947, conditions have changed so much that the targets then set up are now hopelessly out of date.

Hugh Dalton recently gave some amended figures—but not enough of them. Now, the T.U.C., echoing what is in the minds of the public, has told the Government that it is impossible to plan without reliable facts.

The Cabinet has promised to keep the country fully informed while it is fighting the Battle of the Balance of Payments. But it is not doing so speedily enough to be of any inspiration to the ordinary citizen. As things stand today it is a muddled picture, which even the "outside" experts cannot interpret.

Herbert Morrison's fortnightly economic conferences are supposed to keep the picture up to date. Do they provide any inspirational objectives? They do not, for they are factual only on achievements and vague about re-adjustments of targets.

Is there any reason why the workers and industrialists, who have to carry out the physical part of the job, should not know the changes as well—and know them as soon as they are made?

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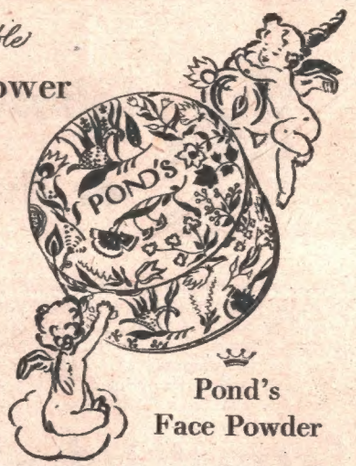

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In six smart shades ...

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NESCAFÉ IS A SOLUBLE COFFEE PRODUCT composed of coffee solids, with dextrins, maltose and dextrose, added to retain the aroma.

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And you can *depend* on your set to last without trouble or tinkering. But, as even the best of sets may falter one day, remember we try to pick, as Ferranti dealers, good dealers — people who provide real service.

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Always impress upon him the brand of tea you want.

He will do his best to oblige you.

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WALLCHARM
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4 Gives gay colour to chairs, tables. Dries in a few hours.
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1 High or Semi-Gloss Stain, dries quickly.
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2 Adds years of life to old lino.

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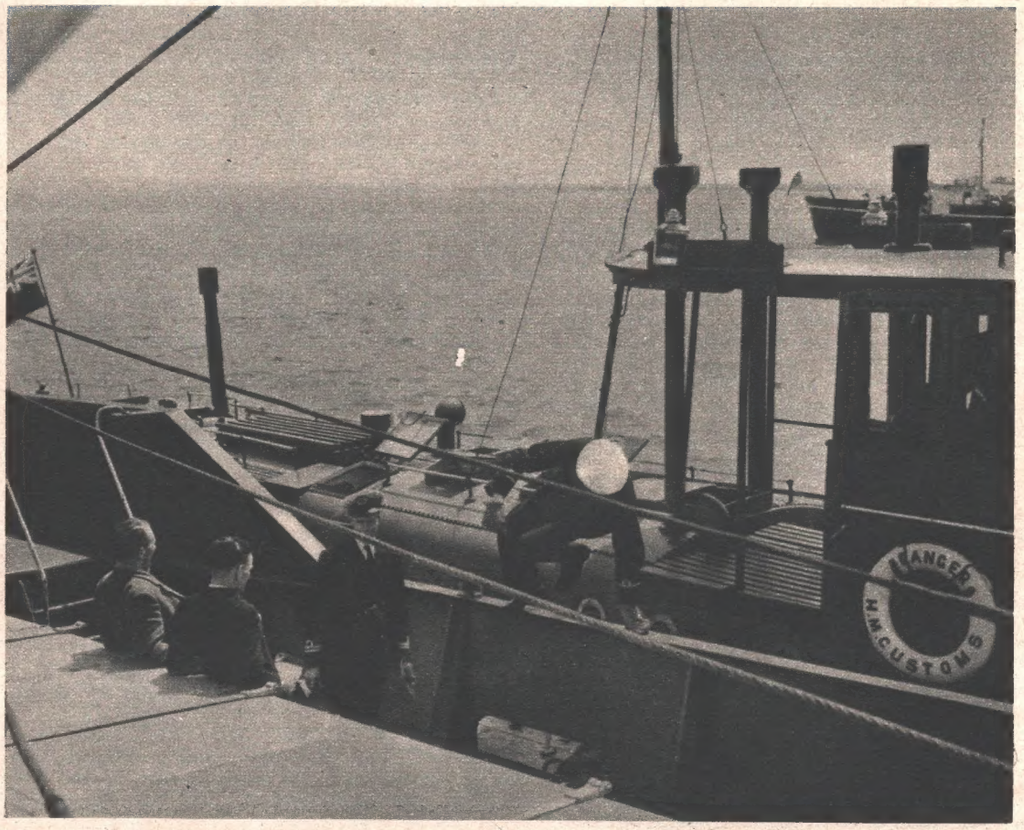
BREAK THE SEA-BORNE CRIME COMBINE

by WILLIAM J. GAGE

As the smuggling racket reaches its peak, goods-runners laugh at fines and jail. The Customs must be given powers to throttle these Black Market lifelines to Britain



Officers of the Waterguard Service set out on an anti-contraband patrol. This is *war*—waged by an understaffed corps against astute and skilful gangster organizations

WHEN I REACHED the Customs shed, dusk was gathering and a heavy mist was rising over the sea. The weather was cold and the wind boisterous. Of the thirty ships anchored in the harbour, you could scarcely see seven.

Two hours before, one of those ships had docked with 680 passengers from the Continent; foreign visitors, British holidaymakers returning to home and work.

After all this lapse of time there were between sixty and seventy passengers still awaiting permission to join their train. They were passing through the Customs, and judging by their expressions this was an experience unwelcome either as the start or conclusion of a holiday.

One man spoke for the whole collection as he passed me.

"Blasted lot of red tape," he said. "I *told* them I'd nothing to declare and neither had I. But they had to go through every darned thing!"

There was some excuse for his irritation. Normally Customs regulations allow about an hour for the clearance of a passenger load of this size.

Customs officials are expected to use speed as well as caution—and railway express trains cannot wait indefinitely.

What the exasperated traveller did not know was that almost as soon as the ship left France a message was flashed to England saying that three members of a smuggling syndicate were believed to be on board. So the check-up this end was intensified.

"Under-Counter" Raw Material

It was intensified as the first stage of a new drive to cut the sea-borne communications of the black market combines. By tramp steamer, luxury liner, merchant ship—and, to a certain extent, air liner—the contraband goods are flowing into this country, providing the raw material for under-the-counter transactions in a score of cities. At the quayside the Customs officials made one great counter-move. . . .

Luggage was carefully searched. Even a child, carrying a doll, was held back while an officer inspected the toy closely until he was satisfied it had not a hollow device.

And when, finally, the train pulled out of the dockside station, four passengers did not catch it. They were detained for questioning. Customs officials had also collected more than a thousand pounds from people who had declared dutiable goods and on the table in the Customs superintendent's office was an intriguing pile of goods, including dozens of pairs of nylons, Swiss watches, bottles of French perfume, bottles of whisky, brandy and liqueurs, hundreds of cigarettes—and an expensive camera.

At first glance, a good haul and a satisfactory night's work. Yet the experienced Customs man shakes his head as he looks at the results of a special check of this kind.

He knows that, even though — following the tightening-up in Customs administration recently—actual contraband "seizures" have gone up 130 per cent, he cannot expect to catch more than a tenth of the actual offenders.

He is not so much worried by the odd holiday-maker who returns to his home, produces a diminutive bottle of perfume, and announces to an admiring family: "They didn't think of looking in the pocket of my pyjama jacket—and I got away with this!"

What the Customs officials *are* worried about is the great increase in systematic smuggling that has been noticed since the war ended—and the fact that today syndicates have come into existence to receive and distribute smuggled goods.

The detection of smuggling has never been more difficult than it is today. Preventive officers at seaports have admitted in reports to Customs headquarters that they are powerless to detect more than a small proportion of the traffic in smuggled goods.

Millions Lost Every Year

The figures of detected cases indicate the size of this traffic. In 1939 there were 9,611 seizures of contraband, followed by prosecutions. Convictions were registered against 2,536 people, and fines imposed totalled £17,573. The latest available figures (for the first year of peace) show that there were 16,642 seizures of smuggled goods. And though the number of actual convictions dropped to 1,596, the fines jumped to £110,900.

In only forty-three instances were offenders sent to prison.

These are the known figures. Officials in the Customs Service won't even guess at the full amount lost to the Treasury.

I put the total at between £1,500,000 and £2,000,000 a year.

What sort of a person is the twentieth-century equivalent of the story-book desperado who, two hundred years ago, led the preventive officers a dance along the lonely stretches of the Dorset coast?

He is not so easily identified as his predecessor.

Even the forty-three senior members of the Customs "Special Branch"—who hold their jobs partly because of their ability to memorize the faces and characteristics of known smugglers—will tell you that spotting a smuggler is a tricky and uncertain business, full of quite embarrassing snags.

Crooks Get "Danger Money"

But they *will* tell you right away that the majority of systematic smugglers today are seamen, either working on their own or for black market dealers who subsidize them and pay their fines when they are caught.

Seamen, once they have the necessary capital (and that is quickly supplied) can openly buy abroad almost every article that is in short supply and urgent demand in this country. Most of these articles can easily be concealed — cosmetics, silk stockings, jewellery, perfume, watches, uncut diamonds, cameras. So certain is the market that seamen are guaranteed "danger money" by their backers—a *minimum* of ten to fifteen per cent of the estimated profits of every deal. They also know that in the unlikely event of discovery and arrest, their backers will pay the fine, which is practically the only punishment inflicted.

Some smuggling is done by seamen working on luxury liners and passenger ships. In two recent cases such seamen admitted having brought 2,000 articles of jewellery and nearly 3,000 items of cosmetic goods into the country. But it is mostly the crews of merchant vessels who are the regular smugglers.

The worst centres are Southampton, Newhaven,

Dover, Portsmouth, South Shields, Tilbury, Liverpool, Glasgow and Harwich.

Now I come to the core of the smuggling system—the stay-at-home syndicate that puts up the money for the men and women who do the dangerous part of the job. Many of the leading figures in this syndicate are known to Scotland Yard and to Chief Inspector Horace Kimber, head of the Customs Investigation Department. Unfortunately the black market operators work through such a bewildering number of channels that it is difficult to establish the direct connection between quay-side and key-man.

It really isn't easy. Last month one smuggling leader was severely questioned at his office but the investigators came away no more equipped for a prosecution than when they entered. Another man is known to employ not only seamen but a team of attractive young women. The girls travel to the Continent in old clothes which they leave behind in Paris. They return to this country wearing expensive frocks, underwear, stockings, jewels. These clothes and accessories are worn merely during the return journey. They are sold, coupon free, on the black market.

Nylon Czar is Ex-Bookie

One of the biggest dealers in illicit nylons in the south of England is a supposedly retired bookmaker, living in Brighton. He has a London office and agents in most of the hotels and restaurants. His chief competitor is a woman in Kensington, London; she has specialized in buying nylons from seamen. She sells them at between 45s. and 50s. a pair in night joints.

Such people pay spot cash for smuggled goods. And they never take part in direct negotiations.

Seamen of good rank and standing are of special interest to receivers because they know that ships' officers are often able to take parcels and suitcases ashore without examination. Not long ago the French master of a Belgian cargo ship was found with a consignment of brandy and wines, suiting material and silk stockings hidden aboard. He denied all responsibility, was convicted and fined. He paid the money cheerfully, since it did not come from his own pocket.

Seamen usually find a hiding place aboard the vessel itself. Here are some of the places where officers have found dutiable goods:

Beneath the dirt in disused oil cans; in bunk pillows that have been unsewn, opened and sewn up again; under floorboards; in toilet rolls; in biscuit tins; in lavatory cisterns; in toolboxes; at the back of refrigerators; in musical instruments; in false-bottomed suitcases; in faked fruit cases; in false panels; in bales of paper.

The truth is that there is scarcely any part of a ship that *can't* be used as a hiding place. Carrying the goods down the gangplank and past the officials comes next. Here are some of the places where smugglers hid small objects while they were actually walking off the ship:

In wigs (worn by the smugglers); in dentures; behind the badges of uniformed caps; in the false toecaps of shoes; in special pockets beneath belt buckles; in false cigarette lighters; in tubes of toothpaste; in children's toys; in pots of jam (£1,500 worth of jewellery was found in one pot of cherry jam); in the corks of bottles of spirit that had been declared; in tins of fruit salts; in the lapels of heavy greatcoats.

Yet with all these evasions and devices, during the last six months 387 seamen of all grades—and of various nationalities—were arrested for bringing contraband into English ports or are under observation as *known* "suspects."

Apart from seamen, a great deal of smuggling is being done by private individuals and travellers working on their own; by private agents of smuggling syndicates or receivers; by members of the Forces serving overseas; and civil airmen or members of Transport Command.

The moment at which contraband passes from the smuggler to the receiver's agent is the moment when the Customs like to pounce. That is why the scrutiny of travellers does not end when the "all clear" chalk mark is scrawled on their baggage.

Where systematic smuggling is going on, the smuggler usually has a description of the agent who will meet him. It's old stuff, really. A carnation in the buttonhole; an inoculation red tape wound around the arm; odd socks or shoes; coloured glasses.

Customs officials have also come to know the "brush past" or "rub shoulder" method by which a smuggler contacts his agent. A man or woman, apparently in a hurry, jostles him and, after walking on a certain number of paces, turns to apologize. Contact is made—and the contraband starts the next stage of its journey.

With all its experience, our £7,000,000-a-year Customs Service sees a steady increase in smuggling. The very great resources of the black market are made available to even casual travellers if they are ready to face the surprisingly small risk of being caught in possession of contraband.

It is a fight waged by an understaffed service against underground organizations of complexity and skill. And at no time does the struggle become more exciting than when the Customs Waterguard Service goes to sea. If the contraband can be intercepted before it reaches shore, then half the battle is won.

Customs Vigilance Service officials are using cutters and converted trawlers fitted with radio in an attempt to stop this "out to sea" smuggling. They know that small yachts and fishing smacks—some of which helped in the Dunkirk evacuation—are picking up contraband in this way.

Some specialize in tracking down waterproofed packages attached to buoys that are left, by arrangement, far out at sea by the smugglers. The coastline of Dorset, Essex and Suffolk makes it easy for small vessels to hide in creeks, caves and coves.

Boat Was a Decoy

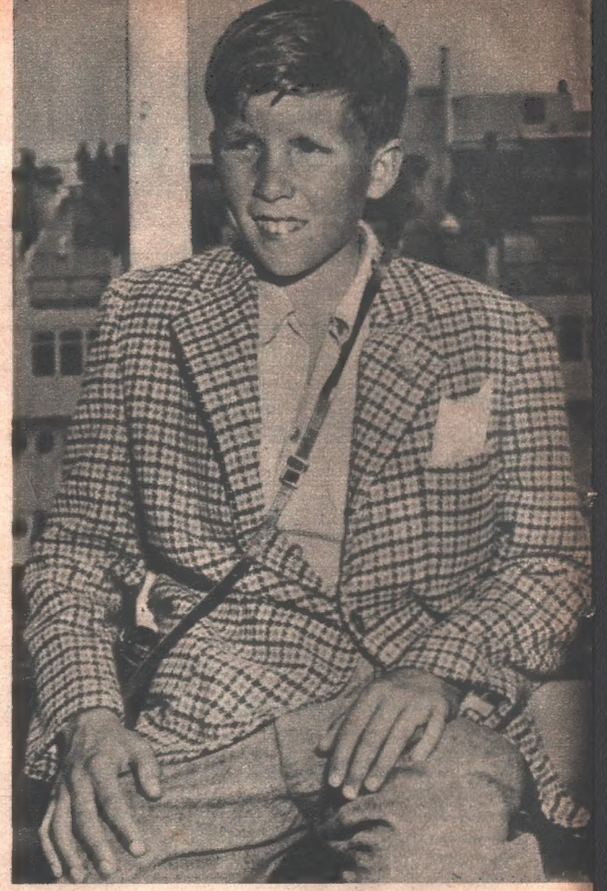
Modern smugglers are smart. Recently Customs authorities found they were receiving anonymous information about the movements of small vessels. These craft were detained and seized—but they contained only minor items of contraband. The smugglers, in fact, had sacrificed one boat as a "blind," while others, loaded with important goods, were unloaded in another part of the coast.

How are we going about the task of fighting this traffic? The easy money that systematic smuggling yields has attracted clever, unscrupulous men to this occupation.

But our Customs Service, although understaffed, has answered the challenge of the modern smugglers by taking the fight into their own territory. The story of their day-by-day campaign to control contraband shows how careful observation and ingenuity can check the black market afloat.

But what *more* can we do? We can deport convicted foreigners and inflict sharper penalties on Britons. We can dovetail our investigations with those of the French, Belgian and Dutch Customs authorities.

We can hit at the heart of the smugglers by checking more thoroughly the credentials of people who buy the large numbers of ex-naval vessels sold by the Admiralty. For a few hundred pounds anyone can buy a seaworthy boat capable of negotiating small creeks and isolated parts of the coast. And remember that this can be the first step which turns an ex-seaman into a smuggler.



Bringing up THE CHILDREN OF DIVORCE

by ALISON MARSH

Whoever wins a divorce suit, the children always lose. Yet something can be done to make amends for the lost link in their lives

TO MOST PEOPLE divorce still remains something which usually happens to somebody else. However much judges and clergy may comment on the increase in divorce, the ordinary happily married couple continue to think of it as an abnormality which couldn't happen to *them*.

They are not unduly surprised when they hear that their friends Peter and Joyce are not getting on together too well. Peter always had a hasty temper and Joyce, long before she married, was known as a bit of a man-chaser.

They are not aghast when they learn that Peter has instituted divorce proceedings against Joyce.

When the decree is made absolute, they say: "Well, perhaps it's all for the best. People who have ceased to love one another as *we do* oughtn't

This boy is luckier than most children of divorce. His parents are rich; he is a Ward in Chancery. Here he bids father, Count Haugwitz Reventlow, goodbye on way to see mother, formerly Barbara Hutton. But for other youngsters divorce means that one parent may become a complete stranger

to be compelled to stay together for their rest of their lives."

This attitude is natural—if regrettable—but where it offends seriously is in skirting around the interests of a most important group of young people—the children of divorce. The children of Peter and Joyce who, through no fault of their own, are involved in a dispute between their parents and suddenly find that their custody and education is a matter which must now be settled in a court of law.

Perhaps this conception of divorce as something that only happens to the people next door, was responsible for the lack of interest in one of the most important recommendations of the Denning Committee on Divorce. This Committee suggested that welfare officers should be appointed to the divorce courts to look after the interests of children of divorced parents.

Turned it Down

The House of Lords discussed that recommendation and decided it meant "interfering in people's private affairs." The Government eventually decided *not* to appoint such welfare officers. Now, without them, what happens to the children of divorce—the children who have lost their parents and may themselves become lost children?

I have known dozens of cases where a court welfare officer, far from meddling in private affairs, could have eased the lot of some very unhappy people. I remember Roger, whose parents were divorced when he was six. His mother, as soon as she was given the custody of her only child, carried him off abroad so that his "wicked" father wouldn't get a chance to see him.

For the next half-dozen years he lived in Continental hotels, with a governess occasionally, casual lessons from his mother, but more usually no education at all. His father, who wasn't considered a suitable parent for him, remarried and brought up a delightful family of healthy, happy children, who went to school and had all the fun that would have done Roger a great deal of good.

Yet that father, who was actually maintaining his son, had no means at all of knowing how Roger lived. A court welfare officer would have kept an eye on Roger for him and saved the unhappy little boy a very miserable childhood from which only his mother's death rescued him.

I know the Smith children, three of them parked on their grandmother because both their parents have remarried and are much too occupied founding new families to bother about the old one.

I know the unhappy Jones girls, brought up by their embittered father and a maiden aunt, meeting their mother in secret and counting the months until they are of age and can join her again. An intelligent welfare officer, representing the children at the time of the action and watching their interests in the years afterwards, could, long ago, have helped them to a better deal.

Following a divorce, the custody of children until they are sixteen, is granted to the petitioner—the so-called innocent party in the divorce action. Sometimes there is an agreement that the children shall be shared or at least that the "guilty" parent shall have access to them. But, as feelings are often bitter—and children as well as partner have been left for somebody else—it is more usual that they pass into the care of the parent who brings the action.

Most of us know that this does not necessarily mean that they are in the best hands by any means. Nor that their future is secure even if their mother (or father) wants them very much at the time of the divorce.

Just Spite

Often children are claimed by one outraged parent simply to spite the other; as soon as the decree is granted the children become an unhappy drag on the luckless man or woman who must begin life again. Often they are placed in the care of grandparents and other elderly relatives, with nobody but the "innocent" party concerned very much about their welfare. The Curtis Report on children deprived of normal home life mentions far too many children of divorce among the occupants of homes and workhouses.

Now suppose the divorce is between "nice" people who both have the interests of the children at heart. They agree, with the aid of their solicitors, that the father shall maintain the young people and they shall pay regular visits to him, even while the custody is officially granted to the mother. Both parties are sure that their own good sense will make everything as happy as possible for the children who must lose the permanent care of one parent.

Then, a year or so later, both parents remarry. The mother marries a man who wants to go overseas and does not want to be cluttered up with children who are not his own, and the father marries a woman who doesn't like children at all.

Or, without even these complications, the mother grows spiteful and—perhaps because of the father's remarriage—refuses to keep to her private bargain about access and visits. Bitterness many years after is not uncommon between divorced couples.

What happens to the children then?

Who makes sure that they are happy, that they are in the best hands and enjoying home life? Who helps the father to see them occasionally? Who keeps them in touch with their relatives and breaks down the iron curtain that an angry and deserted wife will often raise between her children and their father's family.

As the law stands at present, the answer is—nobody. Unless the child is a Ward in Chancery, which happens to the children of the rich only, he is entirely at the mercy of his mother or father, whichever asked for the divorce. If that parent has remarried, he is of course at the mercy of the new partner. And the child's future—so thoughtfully planned at his birth—is now forgotten. He remains the exclusive property of one parent with no other party to balance his life.

It is argued that a child is better off with only one parent if the other is a bad one. Yet few of the "guilty" parties in divorce are really bad characters. What the child, in these circumstances, will always lack is someone who might at least represent the missing parent—someone who would help in the business of bringing him up.

Realizing this, the Denning Report put forward the divorce court welfare officer as a person who might provide the "missing link" between the two principal parties involved in the divorce.

It is surely stark common sense that although a decree of divorce may sever a marriage bond, nothing on earth can break the link between mother and child or father and child. For too long we have tried to pretend that divorce cancelled out a marriage and that children were just an unfortunate complication. But you can't cancel out children and the fact of parenthood.

Watching Brief

If a father or mother is not allowed, by a divorce decree, to carry on the job of bringing up the children of the marriage, then somebody else must hold a watching brief on their behalf. Most divorced parents want to keep in touch with their children, but unless the other parent is friendly, what chance have they?

Tactful court officers—all women and trained welfare workers, of course—would not be able to cut down the enormous number of divorce actions nor ease the misery that comes with every one. But if they watched each case from the point of view of the children, and were always there to help either party about the affairs of the children, they could do nothing but good.

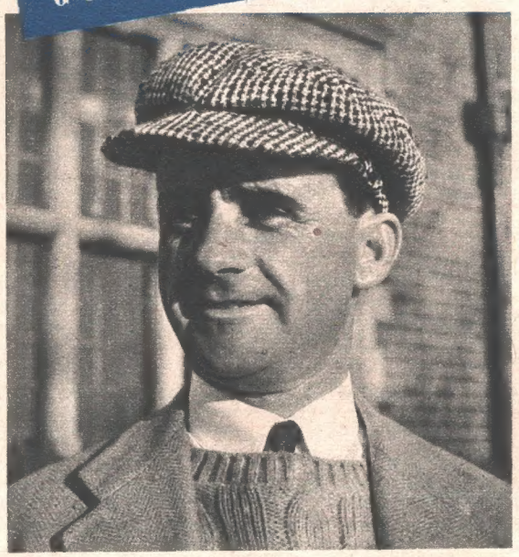
And if they offered help, advice and friendship *only when asked for*, who could accuse them of meddling in private affairs?

The members of the Denning Committee didn't make their recommendation for court welfare officers without knowledge of divorce and the problems that the children of divorce bring. They knew the unhappiness that follows in the years after the decree, and perhaps even the insecurity that these "deprived" children suffer.

The country is full of lost children and lost parents who need friends instead of lawyers. Cannot we think again—and help the lost children.

Mrs. Marie Yvonne Millns with her daughter Denise — a "privileged" child of divorce because she, too, is a Ward in Chancery

Private View of Gordon Richards



GREAT LITTLE 'UN

WHATEVER DISAPPOINTMENT we may feel about our boxers, golfers, cricketers, horses and tennis stars, there's some consolation in the fact that Gordon Richards is the greatest jockey in the world, and he's British.

Forty-three last May, four feet eleven and a half inches in his calf-leather riding boots, and usually on the right side of eight stone, Richards has been riding race horses for twenty-six years.

Great jockeys have always possessed great courage. It was said of Fred Archer that he came round Tattenham Corner "with one leg over the rails." If Richards had to do that to win the Derby, he would not hesitate. Quite indisputably, he's the master of every horse he rides. Fifteen years ago, Abbots Worthy, a big horse, threw him at the tapes and started bolting round the course. Richards jumped into the starter's car, caught the horse, rode him in the race and won.

Temperamentally, he is highly strung and his emotions are ruled by strong likes and dislikes. His temper bubbles quickly, but once the froth is clear, the incident is forgotten. Gordon never bears malice. He's unaffected and unimpressed by his own success.

Intimate friends agree that the only thing in his life is winning a race. They sense the intensity of this extraordinary little man whose waking moments are devoted solely to the business of riding winners. One friend said: "Gordon goes to bed to dream of winning races. But ask him for a tip and you will lose his friendship."

Only the Inland Revenue knows what he earns. *Rules of Racing* lays down five guineas a mount and seven for a win. He may ride 1,000 times a season and win 200 times. That's 5,400 guineas. But owners invariably supplement this with a "present" which might range from a few pounds for riding in the 3.30 on Saturday to £1,000 or more for winning a big event. In addition, retaining fees are paid by various stables for exclusive services, grossing Richards, maybe, another £10,000.

Years ago Richards set out to amass a six-figure fortune—the direct way. Whatever he earned he paid into his bank account. The manager invested it. The arrangement still stands. There is no speculation. Like Richards, all his shares are solid.

He was born at Salop on May 5, 1904. His father was a miner. Later the family went to live at Oakengates, near Shrewsbury, where they kept for hire sixteen pit ponies for children to ride on or to be harnessed in small traps. Gordon used to ride these ponies. When he was old enough he intended going down the pit.

At fourteen and a half he went to work in a warehouse office that dealt in pit stores. Working there, he saw in the local paper Martin Hartigan's advertisement for a boy. Two office girls advised him to try, even helped by drafting the application. Gordon got the job.

Looking back, he considers that the next two years at Foxhill were the happiest of his life. Within two months he had groomed his first winner, My Motto. Riding about wildly with black hair falling over his face, he got the name Moppy. It has stuck; so has the hair.

Coached by Steve Donoghue, Richards rode Gay Lord, his first winner, in 1921. The present was £10. He was not quite seventeen. In five years he was champion jockey of the country.

In 1927, he secretly married demure Marjorie Winckle, whom he first met by offering a lift in his car. They live in a gabled, red-brick house standing on a hill above Marlborough, with glimpses of Savernake Forest through the mullioned windows. It's decorated with burnished racing trophies, and photographs of horses with Richards on them.

Marjorie Richards is practically disinterested in racing. "I haven't time," she once said. "I have quite enough to do looking after Gordon and the boys. *My* racing is to keep his bath water hot and see his meals are ready and there are dry things for him when he comes home wet through."

There are three children—Peter in the Army in Germany, Jack at Blundell's and Marjorie at Battle Abbey School.

Relaxing, Richards makes occasional efforts to forget racing. There are his pigeons, but they are racing pigeons and he's ambitious about winning the Pigeon Derby. He plays bridge, at low stakes, but with an urgency that makes it important he wins. Every week during the season he fills in a football pool coupon—in the hope that he will win at that, too.

For this racing season, the family rented a house at Lancing, and it is there Gordon Richards's day begins. At eight he is in Bedford cords and open-necked shirt, skimming along the verdant lanes in a black Rolls towards the stables, where he gallops a few horses and talks about them with the trainer.

HE returns for breakfast and to dabble with a fan mail of 300 letters a week. He may need a work-out in his private gymnasium, in which case he will cut lunch, change and fly by air taxi to the course where he's riding.

In the jockeys' dressing-room Gordon's valet waits. His name is George Smyth. His master's colours are laid out and ready.

As superstitious as any in that ephemeral profession, Gordon Richards and his valet find their hopes are cluttered up with mascots and lucky whips and charmed horseshoes. Losing his twenty-second attempt at the Derby, Gordon attributes it to his drawing the number thirteen for the line-up at the start. He was also going to wear Steve Donoghue's lucky boots, but these would not fit.

So Gordon will try again; he will go on trying until he makes it. He will go on cutting his lunches, and George Smyth will go on worrying about his master's figure. He knows him so well that, watching Gordon strip, Smyth can guess his weight, almost to an ounce.

After a particularly relaxing weekend, full of goodwill and Marjorie's cooking, Gordon has often come in and started to change. George has looked at him and shaken his head doubtfully. "You rascal," he has said, "you've been eating something!"

DENNIS HOLMAN

Talking Points About

THE TOTE

TOTALISATORS—calculating machines adapted for betting—were first used in Australia and New Zealand. They were not seen in England till 1929, when they were operated at the Newmarket and Carlisle race meetings. The Racecourse Betting Act of 1928 had, in effect, made them legal. Prior to that date their operators would have been "rogues and vagabonds."

★ ★ ★

The totalisator system—that the total sum wagered on any race (less the expenses of running the machine) shall be divided among the backers of the winner in proportion to their stakes—had been known in France as "pari mutuel" ("mutual wagering").

★ ★ ★

In Britain the tote grew steadily in popularity. Turnover in 1934 was £5,000,000. That year a Betting and Lotteries Act laid down regulations for tote operation, but in 1935, when the Act came into force, it was clear it would mean scrapping the existing machines (cost at the White City, £100,000; at Wembley Stadium, £20,000). Protests resulted in revised rules.

★ ★ ★

Surveys indicate that about sixty per cent of tote backers are women, who seem to prefer a window served by a woman clerk. But in prewar tote forecast pools for the Derby, it was estimated that £5,000 a week had to be sent back to women who had filled up their forms wrongly.

★ ★ ★

Totes can go wrong. Once at Clapton Greyhound Stadium the machinery broke down completely and it was announced that stakes would be returned. Unfortunately losers had already thrown away their tickets and there was a wild scramble to pick up the torn pieces.

★ ★ ★

On one occasion at Harringay the tote declared a 15s. 9d. dividend, whereas 5s. 9d. was the correct figure. Backers were paid out, nevertheless, though it meant a loss of £1,500.

★ ★ ★

Bernard Shaw's giant intellect slipped up badly in *Everybody's Political What's What*, when, discussing totes, he wrote: "Money staked on the winner is divided amongst its backers; the machine keeps the rest."

★ ★ ★

Agreeing to alter the passage, Shaw complained that nobody seemed to mind his sharp attacks on Church and Throne and State. Only when he did injustice to so fundamental a factor in the British constitution as the tote did the letters of protest pour in! (In fact, the tote now keeps fifteen per cent of the losers' money and puts considerable sums back into racing.)

★ ★ ★

Defenders of the tote system claim that it is the fairest possible form of betting for the small man, and say that it has done much for racing, on which depends our bloodstock industry.

★ ★ ★

Opponents reply that the increase in betting, which better facilities cause, has its dangers. The £3,000,000 spent at three Liverpool dog track totes in nine months of 1946 meant £3 per head from every man, woman and child in the city.

★ ★ ★

Villages have a tote problem. The parish council of Stainforth, mining township of 8,000 people, asked last year for permission to run their own tote—they were so disturbed at the way betting was draining money from the locality. In 1937, Bailie Beedie, of Coatbridge Council, proposed a tote in every post office in Scotland.

★ ★ ★

At a Paris race meeting in June, 1936, the crowd, dissatisfied with the stewards' decision as to tote odds—a printers' strike having held up the tickets—lay down in their thousands on the race track as a protest.

The green moustache

by FRANK BONHAM

ILLUSTRATED BY YATES WILSON

Sheriff Hannaford thought he was wise to all the tricks. But he took off his hat to Finn Stephens, though Finn *had* picked the worst horse to steal

THERE ARE A HUNDRED CANYONS within a mile of Hangtown. Unfortunately for Stephens, he never reached the first one. The horse played out. Of all the horses in town, he had stolen a spavined one.

The miners dragged him to the jail. One of them threw a carpet bag on the floor. The others, rough men in rough clothes choked with red dust, held the prisoner. "Noose bait, sheriff!" one of them said.

Sheriff Hannaford studied the prisoner, a tall man, slender as a lath, with dark hair and pale eyes. "You don't look a fool," he said. "How'd you come to steal a spavined horse? We don't hang them any higher for stealing a racehorse than a jackass."

The miners roared.

"An oversight," the thief said. He could still smile.

Hannaford questioned him further and made entries in a daybook. *Name: Finn Stephens.* "Occupation?" he asked.

"Card sharp," said one of the men. "Amateur. Give the devil his due, sheriff—he didn't have much time to pick and choose over the horse. He was in a hurry."

Hannaford, after locking the man in the end cell, went through the bag. He had a weakness for imagining dramatic backgrounds for the men he dealt with. This one, an Alabaman by his speech, he pictured on a fine white horse—his own—giving his darkies hell for not picking enough cotton. He saw him, tall and graceful, in a drawing-room, or bending over a lady's hand to pay a compliment. These things his parents had taught him. But they had neglected to teach him a trade. So when the crop failed and he lost the plantation——

Hannaford checked himself. Sometimes he thought he ought to have been a storyteller. He was a large, loose-jointed, grey-moustached man, in his middle years, with round, silver spectacles. The moustache was patterned after General Custer's. Sometimes he would pose in front of a mirror with his hand tucked in his coat. He knew himself to be bashful and uncertain, but he had achieved a reputation for steadiness and courage.

HE came across a flat box full of brushes and twisted tubes. He grunted. An artist! A famous one, no doubt, exiled for taking liberties with the wife of some nobleman whose portrait the artist was painting.

He was tempted to ask about it. He refrained. It was harder to hang them when you had become interested in them.

The next day a west wind brought the choking fumes of the smelters into Hangtown. Grimacing at the nauseating taste of sulphur, Sheriff Hannaford carried the prisoner's dinner to his cell. Staring through the grilled window, he saw Finn Stephens hunched on his cot. Stephens was coughing. He arose in agony, gasping for breath.

Hannaford unlocked the door. "You didn't have enough grief havin' t.b. You had to steal a horse, too!"

"Not t.b.!" Stephens gasped. "Asthma. Damned fumes. Get me—every time."

"Asthma, eh?" Hannaford's ready sympathy leaped up. "Doc Jennings has a cure for asthma. Want I should call him?"

"No cure. But—try anything once."

Dr. Jennings came in half an hour. The sheriff watched curiously while he sprinkled crystals on a bit of blotting paper in a saucer and touched a match to the paper. He placed it on a stool, told Stephens to kneel before it, and threw a blanket over him. In five minutes Stephens's voice said: "Doctor! What is this? It's remarkable!"

"Saltpetre," said the doctor. "Some European discovered that the fumes are good for asthma. I'll leave some in case you have another attack."

In thirty minutes Finn Stephens was breathing normally. He turned the crystals with his finger. "Saltpetre," he said. "Ordinary saltpetre." He regarded the sheriff intently, frowning a little.

Hannaford cleared his throat. "Holler when you're through eating."

Stephens nodded. Then, as Hannaford was going out, he said quickly: "Sheriff!" He stepped close and ran a fingertip down Hannaford's jaw. "I have never seen such a jawline as that. Never."

Hannaford grasped the butt of his gun. "Hold on, mister! I ain't took in *that* easy"

Stephens's hand fell away. "I—I'm sorry, sheriff. Really, it was quite spontaneous. I'm an artist, you see. You have a fine jaw, what I would call a—well, a military jaw."

Self-consciously, Hannaford grinned. "It's a cavalry jaw. You can hang horseshoes on it." He smoothed the General Custer moustaches.

It was unfortunate for Finn Stephens that the circuit judge was in town. In the morning he was arraigned for horse stealing. Hannaford asked him: "You deliberately stole that horse? You weren't drunk?"

"I am afraid I wasn't," Stephens said pleasantly.

He was sentenced to hang on Saturday.

That evening the sheriff was surprised to find an excellent likeness of himself sketched in charcoal on the adobe wall of Stephens's cell. "Like it?" the artist asked.

"It's right clever," the sheriff conceded.

Stephens regarded it critically. "I have three

Through the bars, Hannaford watched his likeness come to life—moustache first

POLITICAL KUDOS ● HAVE WE GOT HOLLYWOOD BEATEN? ● OUR LEGAL SYSTEM

—These are the subjects, raised by John Bull readers, that J. B. Priestley discusses this week

Priestley's Page

Q. "A friend argues that in Britain we persistently overrate the achievements and importance of politicians. Do you agree?"

YOUR friend was quite right. Let us take an example. In that otherwise admirable work of reference, the *Dictionary of National Biography*, Michael Faraday receives less than two-thirds of the space given to Disraeli.

Yet there can be no doubt whatever that the achievement, influence and importance of Faraday's life and work were far greater than those of Disraeli.

There is probably not a country in the world today that is not reaping the harvest of Faraday's experiments and discoveries, for electricity is used everywhere, and probably a thousand million men and women, most of whom have never heard of Faraday, owe something to his researches.

Can anything like this be said of Disraeli? Certainly not. Yet he claims far more space in this first-rate work of reference, simply because we have got into the habit, as a people, of thinking that politicians and political life are of the highest importance.

Of course they are very important indeed, but so are the arts, sciences, philosophy, inventions. And notice how little space is given to all these in our Press.

Q. "What is your view of the comparative merits—and faults—of recent American and British films? Do the best British films really beat the American?"

ALTHOUGH I am not a professional film critic and therefore do not see all the films, it seems to me that the best British films do beat the American.

And it is a fact that the three films I have liked best during these past twelve months have all been British—*Odd Man Out* (for its superb direction and acting), *Great Expectations* (especially for its early scenes, which are wonderful), and *The Overlanders* (as exciting as any Western and yet far more truthful and sincere).

If Hollywood has sent us three films as good as these, I shall be delighted to know what they are. It happens, however, that when a British film is good it has qualities that make a special appeal to me—sincerity, truthfulness, integrity.

On the other hand, there are certain qualities and characteristics in the typical Hollywood product that make no appeal to me. Thus, Hollywood films are undoubtedly more "glamorous" than British films, but, as it happens, I do not care tuppence for "glamour," and, having been in the kitchens where it is cooked, I am not taken in by it.

Again, if you want films that are musical comedies on a vast (and idiotic) scale, then Hollywood and not Denham or Elstree is the place to find them. We do these things badly and the Americans do them probably as well as they can be done. But I do not happen to share the taste of most filmgoers for these expensive monstrosities, which seem to me incredibly silly and tedious. (I can enjoy the spectacle of stage dancing but cannot enjoy—at least, for long—dancing on the screen.)

Where Hollywood easily leads is in wild humour, like that of the incomparable Marx Brothers, and in slick, smooth light comedies, like those that Lubitsch used to direct.

There can be no doubt, however, that, while British films have been rapidly improving, Hollywood films have declined with equal rapidity. The best Hollywood pictures of ten years ago were altogether superior to those we have seen during the last year or two.

There are several good reasons for this decline. The new stars are not as good as the old ones. The stories are petering out. Producers and directors over there are getting stale, and not enough authority is given to the writers.

Mr. Rank and his colleagues have a great opportunity to take the lead, now that British technicians are so much better than they were, simply by telling stories on the screen that Hollywood producers, restricted as they are, dare not use. Our best allies are American censorship and prejudices.

Q. "What do you think of our legal system?"

ON many grounds it compares favourably with those of most other nations. But it does seem to me horribly slow, cumbersome and expensive, so that I would advise anybody against litigation if there is any other possible way out.

There is one way that is sometimes possible, and that is for both parties to agree to a private arbitration of their dispute.

For example, years ago I disagreed sharply with my American publishers about an important clause in a contract I had with them. They read this clause one way and I read it another way, and we could not agree. Finally, we decided to appoint a referee or arbitrator and to abide by his decision.

Arnold Bennett kindly accepted our request for him to act in this capacity, and my publishers and I each put our case to him. He made a decision—a thoroughly sensible one—and we kept our word to abide by it.

The total cost to us both was a couple of boxes of cigars, whereas if we had gone to law we should have wasted months and probably spent thousands of pounds.

***** If you have a question for Mr. Priestley send it on a postcard to the Editor. No letters, requests, or appeals, please.**

Continued from previous page

days. I might be able to do some kind of portrait, if you like."

Suspicion's cool finger touched Hannaford's neck. "Sure," he said. "Only, of course, you'll have to do your studyin' through the bars." And he grinned.

"That's all right. I'll want my paints and some canvas."

Hannaford stroked his moustache. A tug-of-war began in his mind. It was his official duty to suspect Finn Stephens's generosity. But the dark, hollow features were without guile. "All right," he said.

He brought the paintbox. The artist rummaged through it. "Damn! Completely dried out! And there wouldn't be any supplies closer than Sacramento." Then he snapped his fingers. "You've got assayers by the dozen. They'll have minerals I can use for pigments. It may be unorthodox, sheriff, but we'll have a picture!"

Hannaford brought the minerals and a mortar in which to grind them. He had a frame made and stretched heavy duck over it. Stephens mixed his paints and daubed at the canvas. The sheriff's face emerged moustache first.

Hannaford watched the likeness of himself come to life, the eyes bold, the jawline stark. It was not the man Hangtown knew, but the one who now and then posed before a mirror. The sheriff began to wish that, somehow, he could make it easier for Stephens to go, for go he must.

Yet the artist seemed to have forgotten about it.

"Waiting to swing doesn't seem to bother you like it does most," remarked the sheriff.

Stephens shrugged and put a tiny catchlight in the sheriff's right eye.

The portrait, when it was finished, was better than the picture of the woman behind Finney's bar. The sheriff wished it were someone else he was hanging in the morning. This was a sincere and intelligent man who had lost sight of his star somewhere. . . .

IN the early hours of the morning the dull stroke of an explosion awoke the sheriff. He thought at first it was an untimely shot among the mines. Then he knew it was too close for that. He heard sounds in the corral. There was a strong beat of hoofs in the alley.

Grabbing his trousers, Hannaford ran to the jail. Clouds of smoke churned in Finn Stephens's cell. By the light of the lantern, Hannaford discovered that two of the bars of the window and a section of the mud wall had been blown out.

Some men ran up the street from the saloon. They were too far in their cups to be of much help. "Stephens!" the sheriff shouted. "Someone must have slipped him some black powder! He's blown out half the wall."

This time the artist had taken the best horse in the corral—Hannaford's.

They found the horse some weeks later, but they never found the horse thief. Hannaford was secretly relieved. With an election coming up, he didn't want it to get around that the sheriff himself had supplied the powder for Stephens's escape.

It had been several days before he'd figured out that all the materials for black powder had been in Stephens's cell for two days. Saltpetre, charcoal and sulphur. Sulphur that he himself had brought for yellow pigment. Ground fine in the mortar, tamped day by day into a hole a sharp stick could have drilled in the adobe wall, the powder had unlocked the door.

The sheriff was not an ungenerous man. He held only one thing against the artist. Stephens, just before he left, had impudently tinted the Custer moustache alfalfa green.

"Only a holiday train . . . but I saw it grow from an empty shell into an entity glowing with life"

That's another lot away!

by GORDON BECKLES

Following the Holiday Trail, Gordon Beckles goes behind the scenes at a railway station. It's just like waiting backstage before the curtain rises on a premiere

I HAVE BEEN TO SEE A TRAIN OFF to the seaside. Exciting? Yes, very; it was all rather like the tense moments just before the curtain goes up on a spectacular play—and, besides, the train was going somewhere, which is more than many plays do.

The train was due to leave at noon and the clock above the end of the platform said 11.42 as I arrived. Eighteen minutes to go.

The scene? You know it well. Someone called "Aunt Emily" was crowding up the platform calling for "Freddie." A small woman, with a lot of parcels, wasn't sure it was the right train after all. There were three dogs getting in everyone's way. Four perambulators, too. A pretty girl with a sort-of-hat on the back of her head was already kissing a young man goodbye as if she didn't know he was going to see her next week.

Just a train.

But I had been behind the scenes. I had seen the cast assembling. This is how it had all started.

The first player on the scene was the foreman in charge of cleaning. He arrived at six o'clock that morning at the "carriage siding" seven miles away. The train of twelve coaches was lying there, as empty of life as the beer bottles still on the floor of the unswept compartments. It was clean enough outside, for it had passed through the "carriage-cleaning" shed the night before, and its sides had been sprayed with water.

The foreman was in charge of a troop of nine women cleaners. It took them two hours to do their job properly.

About this time (but several miles away), the driver of the train was waking up in his home. He wasn't quite sure of his position on the duty roster, so he didn't know where he might be at the end of the day. But he went to the engine depot and signed on for duty. So did the man who was to be his fireman. If you are interested in such things—and who isn't, with fares going up?—the driver was at the end of a week which would give him a basic £6 6s. 0d., while the fireman's reward would be £5 7s. 0d. (And they get a "lodging allowance" if it's a long non-stop run, involving a night away from home.)

Another driver and fireman were signing on for duty about this time. They were in charge of the light engine which would draw the train into the platform. After which they could enjoy themselves for half an hour looking at the passengers.

Such were the first players in a cast which was to grow to a hundred or so before noon.

"*The train from platform fourteen is the twelve o'clock. . . .*" thundered a voice like Greta Garbo's over our heads.

The Girl in the Glass Cell

I went in search of the voice.

The owner of the voice sat in a little glass cell high above the platforms. She was boiling water for a cup of tea. By her side was an official time-table—a complicated affair, copies of which are given to the principal members of the staff—and a pile of gramophone records. In the mornings she puts on military marches, to send people off to work; in the evening nice soothing pieces, to send them home.

"I suppose," said this lady, "that I do sometimes have a sort of feeling of control over people. D'you know, a funny thing happens when you give an instruction.

"For instance, the stationmaster may see that there is a hold-up at the barrier and he gets me to announce that 'all passengers should have their tickets ready the right way up,' and a moment later you can see simply hundreds of people all making exactly the same gestures, looking at their tickets, holding them up. Just like a huge army of robots working by a switch.

"I often wonder," she went on "whether, if I suddenly asked them to stand on their heads, please, they'd do it. Most of my broadcasts are the usual stuff, and about lost children and so on. Although the other night I did have to announce that no more film stars would be arriving that night, to clear people out of the station.

"A friend of mine who works at another station was told that when her husband heard her announcing he always said: 'There goes my old woman nagging at me again.' So the next time I saw my own husband down in the crowd below it was an awful temptation to say: 'I can hear you, dear!' on the loudspeaker.

"Excuse me . . . *the train from platform fourteen is the twelve o'clock. . . .*"

Down on the platform again I met the principal man of the piece.

He was tall, dark and elegantly dressed. He wore a black coat, striped trousers, an Anthony Eden soft black hat. At the slightest provocation he will change into a top-hat. He was the stationmaster, and in his hands he carried a pair of white gloves.

The Beer is Loaded

They had just taken the last case of bottled beer into the second restaurant car. The attendants on these cars get a basic £2 16s. 0d. a week, and share out the obligatory ten per cent on the bills. They are more than likely to offer you a double whisky or gin. The bigger the bill you have to pay the bigger their ten per cent.

The stationmaster shifted his pair of white gloves from one hand to another and gave the whole scene a paternal smile. Here was the pride of a great railway line; over £100,000,000 in salaries stood behind it, over 600,000 workers were in some way or another wrapped up in this moment. The engine that drew it was one of 20,000 in Britain. The twelve coaches were a dozen out of 5,000 dozen.

And at the station end of the platform, concealed from view, there was at work a great organization—timetable compilers, engineers, draughtsmen, managers, artists, superintendents. At that moment I wondered: Could this unique mechanical unit ever take off with such a load?

The time was now 11.58. Two minutes to go. The platform foreman blew a whistle twice.

Noon.

The platform foreman (he doesn't wear any gold on his hat; you'd mistake him for a senior porter) waved his hand to the guard, the ticket collectors banged the gates closed, and then the foreman pushed a button on the side of a pillar.

"What does he do that for?" I asked.

"To tell the signals to pull the stick."

"Stick?"

"Give the green for 'off.'"

The engine did not whistle. It just gave a puff-puff-puff, and the train began to glide slowly from the platform. With three hundred people on their way to the seaside.

I turned to the stationmaster and shook him by the hand—the one without the white gloves—rather as if I had never seen anything like it in all my life.

And perhaps I hadn't. . . . Here was a commonplace incident on a railway station, if you looked at it one way, but it had been transformed into something exciting just because I had been behind the scenes—seen the train grow from a dishevelled shell in a backyard siding into an entity glowing with life.

I thought again how interesting things can become. . . .

Swansong of the Sahibs

by HARRY HOPKINS

Self-government in India means goodbye to privilege and polo for the British ruling class there. But as the sahibs come home, other Britons sail out to play a new role

In Viceregal Lodge, New Delhi, Lord Mountbatten, twenty-sixth and last of the Viceroys, stands before a portrait of Robert Clive, who was the pioneer of British rule in India

THE GREAT GREY SHIP slid slowly into the Southampton quayside. The band, sheltering from the drizzle in a warehouse doorway, played "There'll Always be an England."

At the rails were sun-bronzed faces. A woman in a white dress started to wave. Others pointed and talked excitedly, or stood, motionless, gazing at this first bit of England out of lack-lustre eyes.

There were old and young among them; desiccated old men and strange, pallid children who looked as though they had just been taken out of a box and unwrapped.

These were the sahibs coming home.

The burra sahibs, the chota sahibs, the memsahibs, the miss-sahibs, the young sahibs. They had laid down the White Man's Burden and were coming home.

For nearly two hundred years India had been a bright red pendant on the map of the world. For nearly two hundred years, to possess a white face in India had been to be an overlord, a king, a god, a dispenser of joy and sorrow, life and death to one-fifth of the human race.

And now, suddenly, the curtain had come clumping down on this great Imperial drama.

"I have bought a steamer ticket for about August 16," Lord Louis Mountbatten, twenty-sixth and last of the Viceroys, had announced before his appointment as Governor-General of Nehru's India.

Already many a white, wide-spreading bungalow stands empty in its spacious compound, and the tree-rats gambol undisturbed about the servants' quarters at the back.

The famous Yacht Club of Bombay—sahibry's holy of holies wherein no Indian was ever permitted to set foot—is closing.

And forty-five thousand sahibs and memsahibs confront in mid-career a cataclysmic change of fortune.

The choice before them is simple. They can stay—or they can go. But whichever they do, it will be a life utterly unlike the one they knew. For most it is a choice of evils.

Hobson's Choice

In the bar of London's Overseas Club the journalist sahib toyed with his drink and said: ". . . I have a very nice house in a hill station out there . . . fine garden. . . . But is civil war coming? Who can tell?

"Britain's my home. I don't mind the cold. I don't mind doing without servants. But, you know, Communism's just around the corner. It's choosing between a storm and a blizzard—and I have the next two weeks to make my mind up."

He took my arm. "Of course," he said, "you understand all this is strictly 'under the punkah.' No names, please. If I go back, well, you know how it is. . . ."

I knew how it was. For years these men had been on the top of the world, their world. They had done and said almost exactly what they

View of Old Delhi, with huge Jama Masyid mosque in background. Homing sahibs may ask: "Has austerity Britain anything to show so fair?"

Secretariat buildings, New Delhi. For generations British officials have trodden such corridors. Now many go—their prospects uncertain

pleased. And it had been the Indians, the lesser breeds without the law, who had fought and cringed for their favours. Now, almost overnight, the boot was on the other foot.

A bronzed young man strode into the bar. The journalist sahib introduced the sugar-planter sahib.

"Me? I'm chucking it—definitely," said the sugar-cane sahib. "That is, if I can get a job outside India."

When the sugar-cane sahib had gone out to India he'd been a clerk of twenty-two, getting £3 a week. For him, as for hundreds like him, India meant adventure, power, a style of living otherwise beyond his wildest dreams. In his thirties he was making over £1,000 a year and living as no lord in England can any longer afford to live.

"If Things Went Wrong—"

"It may be all right in Bombay," he said, "but my sugar-cane factory is three days from the nearest city—and if anything went wrong it wouldn't be three days, it would be three months.

"Before the war our nearest European neighbours were ten miles off; now it's fifty miles—and a hundred to the nearest doctor. With all the neighbours going, it's getting to be terribly lonely for a chap's wife. . . .

"You know, we *did* depend on British bayonets," he said.

"In the old days, well, there were compensations. You could save a hell of a lot. You could get things done because you were British. Now you're the same as the Indians and you have to bribe like them . . . and now they're going to abolish the first-class carriages."

Starting over again at thirty-five—a sahib no longer—wasn't easy. There were jobs going as insurance clerks and such like. "But, you know, it's such a come-down." For a job in English sugar beet he'd been offered £300 a year.

In this strange new world, where the distinction between a sahib and a non-sahib is so imperfectly understood, it can't ever be easy.

In the lounge of an English country hotel was a middle-aged man who, for nearly thirty years, had served as a police officer all over India, upholding the Pax Britannica. Few know so well the slimy and labyrinthine ways of the Indian underworld.

"This is my first leave for ten years," he said. "And now, in the middle of it, I'm suddenly told: 'O.K., you've had it.'"

For him the end of the Raj meant the collapse of the carefully planned structure of security that sheltered him, his wife, his mother, and two children still at boarding school.

Now, nearing fifty, he met only polite official hints that he was too old for another job; that he would be wise to make his own plans.

"For me there may be no choice but to go back," he said. "I like India, but I can see no easy future out there. I have many Indian friends, but I'm a bit afraid of my treatment from the top.

"You know what Lord Linlithgow said the other day. He said: 'We did our duty and we did our best.' And that's true, you know. I don't think we should be abandoned now."

One young police officer had decided that he must turn student again, resuming the engineering course he'd broken off fifteen years before to sail for India. "I find English employers are apt to demand technical qualifications," he said. Two others were going out to Haile Selassie's police in Abyssinia; another was bound for Singapore; a fifth had found a niche as a welfare officer in an Indian coalfield.

But the most pathetic victims of the passing of Kipling's India are the thousand or so police n.c.o.s recruited from the British Army. These men were never pukka sahibs; they were sahibs by reflected glory, but, in the days when they enlisted, that was enough.

How different now! Their meagre pay has been cut to Indian levels. To live they must succumb to the corruption that riddles the rank and file of the Indian police. And now their British officers are going.

Their contracts are with the Indian provincial governments, not, like those of their officers, with the Secretary of State, and they will look in vain to Whitehall for rescue.

For the pukka sahib it could never be thus.

The young Indian civil servant who had ruled three million people in an area as large as a big English county settled himself in the window seat of the flat he'd just found for himself in London and told me how glad he was to be out of it all.

"We *were* once the rulers of all we surveyed," he said. "We could do a good job. But now we get all sorts of interference. At first I was lucky; but then I came up against a maze of corruption and inefficiency and nepotism beyond anything anyone in England can ever imagine.

"It's heartbreaking. You either have to sink your own standards or go."

£7,000 Plus Pension

He was going. He was thirty-six, with that fresh look that comes from years of good food and attention. And now, after fourteen years' service, a grateful country would give him £7,000 compensation and a pension of two-thirds of the £1,000 a year he'd have got had he completed his term.

Peak in the Indian Civil Service compensation scale is £8,000, awarded after sixteen years' service. A tidy sum for a man still under forty. In eclipse, as ever, nothing but the best is good enough for the gentlemen of the I.C.S.

And so, as these five hundred pukka sahibs of one of the most remarkable Empire-building forces in history lounge in the long chairs in their clubs and wait impatiently for the Indian governments to give them the opportunity of declining their invitations to remain, they have less cause for anxiety than most of their brother sahibs, overtaken by the end of their world.

The special sahib-placing section set up by the India Office in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour is unlikely to have them long on its hands. They are still comparatively young and vigorous, highly educated, accustomed to great responsibility, of diversified experience.

Many will go to strengthen the Home and Colonial Civil Services. Others will make their mark in business But jobs or no jobs, for a good many of the sahibs this austerity England is not the "home" they dreamed of under India's metallic skies.

It is Red Ruin.

"And Hartley Shawcross says the standard of living hasn't fallen," exclaimed the doctor sahib—lately medical officer to an Indian state railway. He held up the towel in his club's washroom disgustedly. The towel was full of holes.

"We have to scramble around for meals. We can't get our laundry. Even the house I bought over here I can't get into. No matter how much money you may have you can't be comfortable any more. We're leaving. I don't know where we're going, but we're leaving."

Some Will Emigrate

For many an ex-sahib and his family today, England is only a stepping stone on the way to Kenya, to South Africa, to Australia. It is to these lands today and not to Bournemouth, Cheltenham, or South Kensington that the good sahib goes to lay his weary bones.

And what of those other pukka sahibs, those of the Indian Army?

I asked a lieutenant-colonel who had spent eighteen years grilling under the Indian sun whether he'd stay out there or not.

"You'll have to make it worth my while now," he said. "You see my future, my pension, was absolutely assured. I was serving the King. I had my friends around me. It was a pleasant life among pleasant people. But now . . . well, you have to make it worth my while.

"As it is, I've been quite satisfactorily placed in the British Army. And if I don't care to stay in England, well, I can go to Egypt, to Malaya, to Burma. . . ."

The great majority of Indian Army sahibs see things the colonel's way and have applied like him for transfer to British service. Most of the others in the "over twenty years" service category are pocketing the compensation and pension offered and are on the way towards fulfilling a cherished ambition: a house and a bit of land in the English countryside.

Their exodus en masse will throw the Indian Army into chaos. But Messrs. Nehru and Jinnah will have to offer handsome terms indeed to induce them to stay.

The missionary sahib sipped his lemonade. From the Punjab storm-centre he controlled a network of much-needed hospitals, schools and churches.

"We shall stay," he said. "We shall stay until we're thrown out or restrictions bar our spiritual work.

"Since the Cabinet mission there's been a quite notable increase in friendliness towards us. We

as I was saying . . . . by Herbert Hodge

WHY WORKERS BOTCH THEIR JOBS

Back at his desk again after being "absent, sick," Hodge adds a postscript to his recent article which asked: Are we slapdash nowadays—and, if so, why?

NEWLY OUT OF HOSPITAL, the only subject that seems to *me* really worth talking about is, of course, what I now proudly refer to as "my operation."

Looking at myself in the bathroom mirror, I feel like a work of art, fit to be exhibited at the Royal Academy over the signature of the surgeon who did it.

But I find my friends don't take that view at all. They call in to ask about it, but, as soon as I get enthusiastically launched into the details, they're apt to say: "Don't forget you're eating your dinner" (or whatever meal it may be), and steer the conversation towards something milder, like gardening.

I realize, therefore, that the exciting details of my operation are fit to be spoken of only in the company of the chosen few: us old comrades of the surgical ward who know how many stitches make five —and who would continue to demand our dinners (if we could) in the operating theatre itself.

☆ ☆ ☆

WHILE I was in hospital, I went on receiving a steady stream of letters in reply to the question I asked on this page about sloppy workmanship, just before I went in. Are we as good workmen as we used to be, and if not, why not?

I've now got a mass of letters on my desk from readers all over the country, in all kinds of jobs, and, seemingly, of all ages. (Those who give their age range from the teens to the seventies and eighties.)

Many of these letters are long ones, too; full of good stuff—the stuff of personal experience.

When I asked the question, I hoped to get enough replies to enable me to tackle the subject in another article; but I've got enough personal stories to make a book.

☆ ☆ ☆

I FEEL that these letters give me both a broader and more intimate picture of what most of us are feeling at the moment than any mass-observation or public-opinion survey could have given me.

They nearly all give the impression of being written red-hot; straight out of the writer's heart. And that's the stuff that really counts. It's the kind of response that makes me wish I could chuck up everything for a while, and sit down and write long personal replies.

Most of the writers agree that there *is* more sloppy work being done today than there used to be. Many of them feel that they, themselves, are not doing as good work as they could. And they give all kinds of reasons.

☆ ☆ ☆

ONE of the obvious practical difficulties is that of obtaining raw materials, which often compels a good craftsman to do a bit of botching, plus the fact that most of the younger men have spent their apprentice years in learning how to destroy instead of how to produce.

There's the spiritual difficulty, too—the feeling that there's no particular purpose left in life, so there's no longer any point in putting yourself to any great trouble to do especially good work. This is a feeling that women readers stress more strongly than the men.

Then there's the psychological problem—the point made by many chaps who work at the bench.

They feel they are carrying far too many non-producers on their backs ("tin-pot charge-hands, foremen, managers and clerks," as one engineer puts it), and that the man at the bench will never put his heart into his work again until he sees some of these paper-organizers putting on overalls and working at his side.

☆ ☆ ☆

FOREMEN and managers, on the other hand, seem more inclined to put the blame on football pools and similar distractions which, they say, absorb so much of the average man's mental energy that he's got little left for the practical problems of his job.

One man puts up an extremely well-reasoned argument to support his belief that we'd all be much better off if we were mad. It seems to me he's got something there. He's very convincing at first reading, anyway. I must read him again.

But it's the personal stories I find most interesting—the letters from people who have honestly set out to examine their own minds; to describe their own feelings about their particular job and about life in general.

The letters that have moved me most have mainly come from women — nurses, schoolteachers and mothers. Perhaps it's because these are maternal letters, and it's the maternal side of woman that appeals to me.

But I think there's something more in it than that. These women don't get so excited about their personal grievances as the men do —at least, not in their letters. They seem, somehow, more grown-up in their outlook on life—more concerned with what they, themselves, can do towards making life better than with what life, so far, has done to them.

☆ ☆ ☆

MOST surprising thing to me is that so many people should take the trouble to sit down and write to me like this. How a woman, for instance, with a family of eight, plus a part-time job, finds time to write me a four-page letter, I can't imagine. I can only wonder and be grateful.

I'd like to remove, if I can, one small doubt that still seems to exist in some readers' minds, regarding the fate of their letters when they reach me.

More letters than I liked in this last batch began by hinting that the writer suspected it was all a bit phoney and that I'd never look at his letter, but, all the same, he couldn't resist writing.

Well, the truth is that I've never been able to afford to employ anyone to open and read my letters. Nor would I if I could.

All letters addressed to me at the JOHN BULL office are forwarded to my home and opened by me in person.

☆ ☆ ☆

THIS isn't one of my duties; it's one of my greatest pleasures. I've got an insatiable curiosity about what other people think and feel—particularly the people who read this page.

I'm eager to find out how nearly their thoughts coincide with mine and how far they disagree with me. Which is natural enough, considering the subjects I write about.

If this page wasn't a co-operative job, there'd be no point in my doing it. I'd rather be earning an honest crust on the cab.

Each week, Herbert Hodge, author and taxi-driver, views life from the ordinary man's angle

Continued from previous page

gain by being no longer linked with the Raj in the Indian mind."

But the sahibs of the I.C.S., the police, the missionaries, the Army officers do not constitute the bulk of the British community.

Nine sahibs in every ten are business sahibs. The Scotsmen from Dundee who built the vast jute industry in East Bengal; The men from Lancashire and Yorkshire who set the looms clattering in Bombay and Ahmedabad and Cawnpore; the men from South Wales who helped to get the mighty Tata steel plant rolling; the English planters who made Assam the world's tea-garden.

A proportion of the smaller business sahibs have sold out, often because the prices offered by war-bloated Indian capitalists were too good to miss. The proprietor of three small hill-station hotels sells out and buys a restaurant in Bournemouth. A man who has been fruit-farming in India for twenty-four years considers a demand that he takes in fifty per cent Indian capital. A jute mill manager goes home to Dundee; an accountant changes Calcutta for Birmingham. A trickle—but no exodus.

For India is as rich a treasure-house as ever. The big business sahib isn't budging. In some places he's even extending. There are more British than ever in Bombay.

As he contemplates his future in this "foreign" country, the big business sahib detects three clouds on the horizon.

The first cloud is labelled sterling balances —and could be precipitated by a bust-up over the intractable problem of Britain's £1,200,000,000 war debt to India. The second cloud is civil war—for Pakistan's Lebensraum. The third is revolutionary Communism, growing fast in fertile soil.

But there is more involved here than the future of the business sahib. There is Britain's future, too. For here in the East could be the answer to our "export-or-die" dilemma.

India's Shopping List

For the first stage of her industrialization programme India needs £340,000,000 worth of machinery, electrical plant, air-conditioning apparatus, commercial vehicles, road-building machines. As the standard of living begins to rise and a middle class develops, a vast market for consumer goods—which India herself can by no means wholly supply —will open up.

Nehru himself has acknowledged that to carry out her ambitious plans India will need more foreign technicians than ever before. Many believe that, since Mohammedan educational levels are notoriously low, Jinnah's Pakistan will bid particularly high for all sorts of British help.

The Swansong of the Sahibs?

That, certainly. For on August 15, the curtain thuds down on the Raj, never to rise again. Col. Punkah of Poona, with his chota pegs, his choleric shouts of "Boy!" and his habit of regarding India as just one big polo field, is as extinct as the dodo.

But even as the returning sahibs crowd the ship's rail for their first glimpse of Attlee's England, even as a bewildered Smith Memsahib finds herself standing in a Food Office queue when she should be at a bridge party, other Englishmen are setting sail for India—in a very different spirit.

They go not as a chosen race, white faces born to rule brown faces, but as serious hard-working partners with Indians in joint enterprise, in new radio and car and aeroplane and machinery factories — in the building of a New India, and, just possibly, of a New Britain, too.

FREE SPEECH

Youth has the first say this week. A schoolgirl criticizes the Church: others resent the "Victorian attitude" to sixth-formers

I AM A FOURTEEN-YEAR-OLD SCHOOLGIRL and I would like to ask this question—what are the Churches doing?

It seems to me they drive people from God when they do such things as refusing to marry a couple who are not regular churchgoers or refuse to christen a child because its parents or godparents are not religious.

This is in direct opposition to the teachings of the Master. Because a person does not go to church, this does not mean he never prays. Besides, Christ said: "Pray in secret."

Some of our vicars should re-read the parable of the lost sheep. Then they should ask themselves two questions:

"Are we helping the one sinner to repent—or merely mollycoddling the smug, self-satisfied ninety-nine who as often as not go to church just because so-and-so would not like it if they didn't? What would Christ have done?"

They know the answer!—MAUREEN CHANDLER, 35 Ellingham Road, Chessington, Surrey.

Let Sixth Form Girls Grow Up

WHY MUST SO MANY of the aims of higher education be frustrated by the Victorian attitude to sixth-formers still shown by mistresses, parents and the general public?

Girls should not be expected, when continuing their education for a further two years, to tolerate being treated as children, while their contemporaries who have left school enjoy the benefits of adult life.

Not only are we subjected to such indignities as compulsory school uniform (complete with pudding-basin hats)—evidently designed for eleven-year-olds—and a code of petty regulations, but the pressure of homework makes it impossible for us to take an active interest in outside affairs. It is unjust that our friends, who have less ambition and who have chosen an easier way of life, should be able to strike for shorter hours while we have to sweat out our lives in white cotton socks.—FIVE SIXTH-FORMERS. (Names and address enclosed.)

Farewell, Happy Family

AFTER FORTY YEARS' SERVICE, I have just left the firm I joined as a young man of twenty. At a small function given in my honour, the head of the business—now grey-haired himself but just a lad when I first knew him—made me a presentation to mark my retirement on pension.

When I rose to reply, I looked around the room and realized what a happy family I was leaving. These weren't just figures in the same workshop but men and women whose families I knew, whose troubles I had shared.

I went away praying that the old "family" type of business will never disappear from this country.

These enormous nationalized industries may be necessary and may be very efficient, but the country still has need of small and intimate organizations. Long may they last—to send old servants like myself into retirement with happy memories of work well done among pleasant people.—J. L. JONES, Bedminster, Bristol.

What Kind of Democracy?

SEVERAL MORNINGS OF LATE I have had the misfortune to board a bus containing a pack of giggling women whose futile, trifling, grasshopper conversation showed their utter lack of thinking power.

I realized with a sick feeling that these women had the vote. I know several youths who cannot read. I know many more who limit their reading to contemptible trash. These too have, or will have, a vote.

I know many adults whose highest aim is to win a football pool and whose vision is bounded by the narrow confines of their selfish lives. These all have votes. Some are never used at all. Others are used ignorantly and are therefore wasted.

Is democracy possible under these conditions? How much better is government by the intellectual few than by the untutored many!—D. MURRAY ELLIOTT, 36 Sipson Road, West Drayton, Middlesex.

Stop the "V" Sign

THE B.B.C. EUROPEAN SERVICE is still using the "V" sign preceding each item. Surely this must have the most aggravating effect on German listeners—and must convey a boastful attitude to many other Continental listeners.—H. W. HALL, 40 Clever Road, Victoria Docks, London, E.16.

A Labourer is Worthy—

ROOT OF THE LABOUR SHORTAGE is that our young people are still brought up with the idea that the non-productive classes are superior beings.

What will happen to the country when we are all equipped with college degrees and too brainy to "lower ourselves" to manual work?

Then perhaps we will realize the true importance of, say, a dustman in the scheme of things. And perhaps we will at last recognize that, whatever a man's job, he is just as important to his country as the highest-paid office executive. — ELIZABETH DRINKWATER, Millbank House, Anderton, near Chorley.

NOT-SO-NEW ARMY ● ENEMIES IN OUR MIDST ● PRIVATE LIVES ● "WORLD CITIZEN'S" FAN MAIL

I HAVE BEEN IN "Monty's Army" for ten months and I can understand why the Government aren't finding as many recruits as had been expected.

Monty's reforms never get beyond the paper stage. Many present-day soldiers are beginning to think that the old-fashioned spit and polish system will *never* go away.

Does the C.I.G.S. know that every morning we have to fold our blankets in the old Army way and lay our kit—including boots, blancoed packs and slippers—on our beds ready for inspection?—PTE., R.A.S.C., Lancs. (Name and address enclosed.)

Marrying Germans

MISS JEAN WALLS comments on the fuss that marriages between British girls and German p.o.w.s are causing (JOHN BULL, July 19).

Perhaps she does not realize that the fuss is being made by people who remember only too well that we were at war with these same Germans for a good many years, and that through them many people lost their sons and husbands.—M. A. STONE, 32 Victoria Road, Woolston, Southampton.

Different for Frauleins

IN REPLY TO MISS WALLS. If a British soldier marries a German girl she obtains British nationality, but if, on the other hand, a p.o.w. marries a British girl then she becomes a German, thereby condemning herself to a life in a hunger-stricken country.—P.O.W. CAMP GUARD, Colchester, Essex. (Name and unit enclosed.)

Morals: by a Woman . . .

LESLIE BREWER'S VIEWS on "The State of Our Morals" (JOHN BULL, July 19) were interesting.

Where *do* men get the idea that no woman can live without sexual intercourse?

I am a married woman, aged twenty-seven, and I get disgusted to think that a mate can't love without the degrading wish for sex. Nearly every other wife I have asked feels the same. Until men learn to control their feelings we will always have V.D.—MRS. BURDEN, Rose Cottage, Barfreston, Eythorne, near Dover, Kent.

. . . and by a Man

IT IS FAR TOO FASHIONABLE to blame the woman when the worst follows immoral relationships. Not one woman in a hundred, engaged or otherwise, would "go wrong" except for persuasion or pressure from a man.

It is time my sex as a whole learned to cherish women and to treat them with the chivalry that is their right.—L. A. FISHER, 55 Belvoir Road, St. Andrews, Bristol 6.

Waiting for a Girl

WHY WILL WOMEN hold up a queue at a railway booking office, the cinema and even the Tote, while they try to find the money they know well in advance they will have to pay?

The money is invariably right at the bottom of the bag and has to be fished

out from among a medley of powder puffs, combs, lipsticks and all the paraphernalia that women insist on carrying about with them.—H. S. WELHAM, 26 Lennox Road, Worthing.

Esperanto in Three Weeks

CONGRATULATIONS ON THE "John Hoyle, World Citizen" article (JOHN BULL, July 19). Dennis Bardens's courageous admission that he was wrong in his opinion of Esperanto as an effective international medium is an example to journalism. Though Esperanto is capable of expressing every shade of thought I learned it after only three weeks' intensive study.

How long will it be before foreign secretaries talk directly, instead of through the doubtful medium of an interpreter?—G. E. MUNN, Sheffield Transport Esperanto Group, 50 Southey Hall Drive, Sheffield.

∴ Within five days of publication of the article, John Hoyle, Esperantist, received 575 letters from Esperanto students, experts, critics and stamp collectors attracted by the correspondence he receives from all over the world. And John Hoyle reports that more letters are pouring in.—EDITOR.

Holiday Milk

MRS. S. P. H. WONDERS where school milk goes during the holidays (JOHN BULL, July 19).

Certainly the milk is spare during holidays, but I imagine distribution problems would be considerable, and surely out of their weekly saving on dinners during term time parents could rise to the purchase of malted milk, for instance, to make up their children's holiday diet.—MRS. D. TUDOR, 30 Oswin Road, Leicester.

Pity the Roundsman

AS A MILK ROUNDSMAN, I say that it is an impossible task for the retailers to deliver an allocation of school milk to

with my feet up

by Ian Fox

Watch the Dicky Bird

"LET'S SIT DOWN and I'll show you the snapshots we took on Bank Holiday. We had a day at the seaside, you know. There was my girl friend Eileen—you know Eileen—and her boy friend Sid, and me.

"My boy friend couldn't go—he had measles. Now I can't show him half the snaps we took because I met a very nice boy on the beach and he comes in a lot of the pictures and my boy friend might be jealous.

"No, that one's not the boy I met, that's Sid in his new flannel trousers. It's a good thing we took it when we did because soon afterwards he sat on a boat that had just been tarred. Here's another of Sid. No, other way up—he was standing on his head.

"There, that's one of the boy friend I met while I was there. He was ever so good looking. Unfortunately in this photo his head got cut off so you can't see his face.

"This one shows Eileen sitting in a deck chair. Pity her legs were too near the camera, but she's very proud of the photo all the same. She doesn't mind her knees being twice as big as her head because she was wearing her nylons.

"There's one Sid took of the pier. He's a very good photographer. No, the pier didn't really run uphill—I think he held the camera crooked.

"There's my boy friend again with the others—that's him, with his back to the camera. And here's another one of him taken while we were bathing. He'd just been knocked over by a wave, and you can just see his foot sticking out of the water. He's got a nice foot, hasn't he?

"Ah, here's one of me. I was waiting in the queue for ices. I'm that little white dot at the end of the line.

"They were crowning the local beauty queen in the afternoon and Sid took this photo of her, but you can only see her hand. Sid says it got spoilt in the developing, but we think he had his thumb over the lens.

"This is Eileen sunbathing after a swim. No, that dark effect on her skin isn't tan—it's because she was blue with cold.

"Well, that's the lot. I'm very glad there's more film about nowadays. I always think it's so nice to have a record of holidays, don't you?"

FREE SPEECH

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

each house during holiday time. This would at least double a roundsman's heavy load.

May I point out, however, that in many localities free milk is still obtainable during the holidays.—MR. S. F. HUTCHINGS, 33 Victoria Road, Bournemouth, Hants.

Currency Offenders

I AM CONVINCED that many of the people fined for currency offences in Europe (JOHN BULL, July 19) are not so much wicked as stupid. I have just returned from a highly enjoyable holiday in Switzerland without experiencing currency difficulties.

I stayed in an entrancing mountain chalet, visited Geneva, Lausanne, Berne and several other towns, bought presents, and had wonderful food. Total cost including return fare: £35. I could have spent more, of course, but nineteen-year-old shorthand-typists are seldom in a position to do so.—MISS P. C., Norwich. (Name and address enclosed.)

To Call a Doctor

LOCAL DOCTORS' phone numbers should be prominently displayed in public telephone booths.

When a doctor is urgently needed, it wastes precious time to finger through a dilapidated phone book.—MISS AGNES A. MITCHELL, 5 North Shore Street, Campbeltown, Argyll.

Not-So-Down England

COMING TO ENGLAND recently as an immigrant from India, I prepared to expect the very worst. My misgivings had been fanned by vivid radio reports and stories from British Servicemen of the appalling conditions in the country.

Imagine the surprise of my first view of England—hundreds of wives and sweethearts waiting to meet the boat, all attractive, healthy-looking, and well-dressed. The shops are well stocked and things are infinitely brighter than I expected.

Why should Britons abroad give such discouraging reports to would-be immigrants? Nearly all are exaggerated, and all are bad policy.—J. C., Isle of Wight. (Name and address enclosed.)

Fortnightly Films

WHY DON'T CINEMAS in big cities economize on American films by giving them a run of a fortnight instead of a week?

As most towns have many different programmes running at the same time, a fortnightly change would not only give shift workers a chance to see the films they want, but would cut film imports considerably.—MISS N. GILLINGWATER, 95 Barclay Road, Walthamstow, London, E.17.

The Greatest Incentive

YOUR EDITORIAL NOTE on incentives (JOHN BULL, July 19) was timely, but, having seen two wars waste our substance and reduce Europe to chaos, I feel little desire to work harder for the reconstruction of a country which may be destroyed by a third war. Let statesmen remove the infernal dread of war, and they will provide the greatest incentive of all for hard work.—L. CRAKER, 14 Melbourne Way, Bush Hill Park, Enfield, Middlesex.

A Fellow Can't Eat, These Days

I ATTEND A GRAMMAR SCHOOL. At an inter-school sports meeting for boys about my age (15) a buffet was provided. The prices were as follows: glass of lemonade, 4d.; small bun, 3d.; sandwiches, 3d. to 4d. How people expect boys of our age to afford these prices I don't know.

I think it is outrageous. Please do not print my name and address as it may cause embarrassment.—P. C. A., Stanmore, Middlesex. (Name and address enclosed.)

Prefab Preferred

RECENTLY I HEARD a countrywoman laugh in scorn at the modern prefab. She preferred her "olde worlde" thatched cottage—sanitation nil; ventilation practically nil; walls and ceilings uneven; staircase distinctly dangerous; but so pretty that artists would paint it.

Give *me* a prefab, where the windows let in light and air, where one can light a fire without fear that the roof may catch fire, where no vermin nest and nibble at foundations, where the "convenience" *is* convenient, and not a hundred yards down a muddy garden.—K. KIDD, 334 West End Road, Ruislip, Middlesex.

Absentee M.P.s

WE HEAR A GOOD DEAL about miner absentees, but what about M.P.s who are constantly absent from their work in the Commons? The miner loses his pay, but the M.P. still gets his £1,000 a year.

If miners are to be prosecuted, why not M.P.s? — F. CHILDS, Hazelmere Gardens, Gidea Park, Essex.

Tribute to a Story

YOUR SHORT STORY, "The Portrait of Captain Moghraby" (JOHN BULL, July 12) should rank among the best ever written.

Besides being highly amusing it shows a keen knowledge of Eastern mentality and would have done credit to O. Henry, that master of short story writing.—RICHARD STILES, 17 Charmouth Road, St. Albans, Herts.

Boost for the Black Market

I WONDER IF THE JUDGE who recently assessed the value of clothing coupons at three shillings knew the effect his words would have.

His estimate has put the price up: black marketeers had previously been letting them go for one and sixpence!—ROBERT LOCK, Clarence House, Clarence Road, Exmouth, Devon.

★ LETTERS *intended for this feature should be marked "Free Speech." One guinea will be paid for every reader's letter or extract published. Full name and address of the sender must be given (preferably, though not necessarily, for publication). Please keep letters brief.*

THIS WEEK'S COVER

TALKING about his picture, "Beach Scene," Douglas L. Mays, a man of few words and therefore known generally as Mays, discloses: "The old lady in the deckchair is none other than my wife's mother." In general, Mays confesses: "I'm not very fond of humans. I think we are all rather pathetic and silly and filled with a spurious nobility. This does not mean that I like dogs. I prefer cats and cattle—plant life, minerals and architecture." For all his cynicism, Mays does like children—he has four daughters.

JOHN BULL QUIZ

SINGERS

(1) Helen Porter Armstrong was one of the world's most famous singers—under what name? (2) Who made John McCormack a count? (3) Whose voice was recently dubbed in the film of his life-story? (4) Which singer and film star writes political articles and is particularly concerned with the problems of the coloured peoples? (5) With whom do you associate the well-known song "You Are My Heart's Delight"?

DOGS

(1) How did the bulldog get its name? (2) Which breed is sometimes clipped in queer patterns? (3) About how many dog licences are issued in Britain every year? (4) Is there any canine equivalent to fingerprint identification? (5) Where would you be rewarded for killing dogs?

BUSINESS

(1) What does R/D on a cheque mean? (2) In "John Smith and Co., Ltd.," what is limited? (3) What is a bear (on the Stock Exchange)? (4) What is contango? (5) Is there any difference between a trust and a cartel?

MATERIALS

What are these, and for what do we chiefly use them: (1) Pimento. (2) Plumbago. (3) Molasses. (4) Copra. (5) Ambergris.

DRINKS

(1) Where does brandy get its colour? (2) Why is red wine red? (3) Where does port wine come from? (4) What makes bitter more bitter than mild? (5) Which liqueur is flavoured with orange peel?

(*Answers on page 22*)

The secret Heart

by HARRY HEARSON

ILLUSTRATED BY A. R. WHITEAR

Can a man claim poet's licence when he writes of love? Not if he is a husband. But Miss Luxmoore knew the truth—and it made her a schemer

"... a poem," she exclaimed, waving the paper. "My dear, it's too, too divine"

IT WAS BOUND TO HAPPEN. Bound to. Life, Miss Luxmoore had discovered even in her small experience of it, was like that. You spent a large part of your existence devoting yourself to the welfare of your closest friend, scarcely leaving the village for two days at a time; and then, when you did take a holiday for the first time in years, your friend had to get ill and—Miss Luxmoore couldn't help the thought—spoil it for you.

Mrs. Harris seriously ill. Come at once, the telegram read. It was signed by old Dr. Pendleton.

Miss Luxmoore caught the ten-fifty at Waterloo.

One of her first reactions, hard though she strove to stifle it, was the thought that if Barbara died "the poem"—Miss Luxmoore always thought of it as if it were within quotation marks—might at long last come into her own, her rightful possession.

The havoc which "the poem" had created in Miss Luxmoore's gentle breast had given rise to the one great turbulent envy of a selfless life. But even now, as this obsession once again possessed her, Miss Luxmoore fought it off with the honest hope that Barbara might not die.

Try as she would, she could not encompass the vision of plump, luxury-loving Barbara Harris in the embrace of death. It would be so very, very final, after Barbara's years of querulous complainings about her "little illnesses."

And really, you know, Miss Luxmoore told herself for the hundredth time, Barbara had very little to complain about. Everything in life that she wanted had come her way without apparent effort, from that heart-sickening time when the wind of fate had drifted Robert from the quiet charm of Miss Luxmoore to the more exotic blooming of her friend.

Miss Luxmoore had always tried hard not to grudge Barbara this supreme triumph. She still bore the secret scars of it on her heart, and it was to hide them that she had first erected that facade of duty and efficiency which for thirty years had concealed her true nature from the world.

"The train on No. 3 platform is for Exeter and the North Devon line, stopping at Sidmouth Junction and Exeter."

The voice, emerging from the station loudspeaker as if it had a hot chestnut in its mouth, roused Miss Luxmoore to a sudden realization that they had reached Salisbury and that in her haste that morning she had had no coffee.

With a hurried word to a travelling companion to keep an eye on her seat, she bolted out of the carriage and ran down the platform to the refreshment room. An agitated three minutes in a queue secured her a cup of coffee and a bun, and in spite of schooling herself to an outward appearance of calm she managed, during her return to the carriage, to leave a trail of slopped coffee on the platform.

As the train gathered speed on the down gradient off Salisbury Plain, Miss Luxmoore drank the coffee and ate the bun, and for a time idly watched the English scene unfolding itself as the wheels carried her with their monotonous chant towards the red soil of Somerset and Devon. But after ten minutes of this her mind revolted against the steady recurrence of fields and hedges, and returned to an exploration of the lanes of memory—lanes in which her life had been so inextricably bound with those of Barbara and Robert.

It was, she recalled, less than a year after her friend's marriage that Robert realized he had made a mistake. It was the affair of "the poem" that had opened Miss Luxmoore's eyes. Its implications had been unmistakable.

It happened on a day when she had dropped in at her friend's home for tea.

Barbara had greeted her with great excitement. "Look what I've found!" she cried. And she waved a sheet of manuscript at Miss Luxmoore just as Robert wandered in from the garden.

"It's a poem," Barbara explained. "I found it in his desk. My dear, it's too, too divine. Quite the most exciting thing I've ever read."

She turned to her husband and pointed an admonitory finger at him. "Robert," she chided him, "how dared you not show it to me the instant it was written!"

Robert, Miss Luxmoore noticed, looked unusually confused.

"Well, my dear," he said haltingly, "I was—er—sort of keeping it for you as—as a surprise for your birthday. Yes, that's it," he went on a little too quickly, "a sort of birthday present."

Barbara fluttered like a bird. "You mean—you mean it was written for *me?*" she trilled.

Robert flushed. "Who—who else, my dear?"

"But why—why have you used the name Ruth, dear?"

"Eh?" Robert seemed momentarily at a loss. "Oh, well—well, you see, it was a question of getting something to—to rhyme with 'truth.' And—and Ruth just occurred to me, you know." He smiled at his wife. "Dash it all, dearest, I tried hard with your name, but the only thing I could think of to rhyme with Barbara was—was Market Harborough. And you can't write a love poem about a town!"

Barbara smiled again, like sunshine after rain.

"You're blushing," she accused him. "I do believe you're ashamed, you old silly, at being caught out writing a love poem to your own wife."

And then she showed the poem to her friend.

MISS LUXMOORE took it from her with as much coolness as she could summon and went over to the window to read it in order to conceal the trembling of her hands.

The poem was the most lovely thing Miss Luxmoore had ever read. And it was for her—for *her.* She experienced a moment of whirling mental madness in which she saw herself thrusting the poem into the modest neck of her blouse, running away with it to her cottage, and locking herself in.

But of course she did nothing of the sort.

She tried—oh! how she tried—to make her congratulations sound calm. She knew that, so far as Robert was concerned, she had failed; but Barbara at least suspected nothing.

Robert helped her, too, at the end. "Why!" he ejaculated with well-simulated surprise. "I never realized until I saw you reading it, Ruth. It's *your* name, isn't it?" And, somehow, both of them managed to laugh naturally.

Neither of them had ever been disloyal to Barbara in any way. With that

thought, at least, Miss Luxmoore could comfort herself.

Waking with a start to the mundane reality of the railway carriage, she realized that she was thinking in the past tense—thinking as if Barbara were already dead. But of course she was not dead. She mustn't die. Not even so that Miss Luxmoore might at last have "the poem." One day, perhaps. . . .

At Exeter, where they had a longer wait, she comfortably obtained herself a cup of tea and some sandwiches, and made from them a belated lunch. After the business of changing engines, and another short stop at Exeter St. David's, the express settled down to the last steady run of its day—the forty miles of line winding through valleys and between steeply wooded slopes to Barnstaple.

As it carried Miss Luxmoore closer to home and to Barbara, so her mind carried her closer in memory to the latter events of their lives.

It was ten years after the episode of the poem that Robert died after a car accident. The call had come from Much Welton Hospital, and Barbara had rushed over to Miss Luxmoore's cottage in a panic.

They had reached him just before the end.

Just before Robert died he had turned his head on the pillow and looked into Ruth's eyes.

"You'll take care of Barbara, won't you?" he had murmured, and Miss Luxmoore had nodded speechlessly, pressed the limp hand lying on the coverlet of the iron bedstead, and fled.

The task he had entrusted to her had been a hard one.

BARBARA had been inconsolable. Her grief had altogether submerged her. Always she had been weak and helpless, and now she gave in altogether. Miss Luxmoore had had to bully her constantly. There was no other way of rousing her from her lethargy. It was the old battle again—the battle between duty and the sentiment of her secret heart.

And there had been that other, more private battle.

With Robert's death, Miss Luxmoore had found her desire for the poem stronger than ever. It was, she told herself, hers by right. There were times, even—usually in her bed at night, where alone she gave rein to her true feelings—when she envisaged herself stealing it.

It became almost an obsession with her, calling for a quite separate mental fight side by side with her never-ceasing battle against Barbara's supineness.

This constant need for apparent harshness with her friend hurt Miss Luxmoore more than she would have cared to admit. There were times when she would have given almost anything to break down and let Barbara weep on her shoulder but for the fear that it would lead to her friend's utter collapse.

And, latterly, Barbara had added to her burden by constant complaints of little illnesses and pains. Miss Luxmoore had combated them with kindly ridicule.

"You're not a bit sympathetic, Ruth," Barbara would say plaintively. "You never used to be like this. I'm sure *other* people are sympathetic with me."

Then, one day, Miss Luxmoore had discovered Barbara writing a letter to the *Much Welton Examiner*. Her friend had tried to cover it up, with the absurd air of a guilty child caught out in some misdemeanour.

But in the end she had confessed, not without a touch of bravado, that she was writing to the "Help One Another" column in which, week by week, readers of the *Examiner*, writing over the anonymous security of pen-names, propounded their own and solved each other's problems.

"You'll see," Barbara said defiantly. "I shall get some sympathy now—even if it *is* anonymous."

The pathos of the little incident affected Miss Luxmoore deeply, though, as always, she concealed her pity by a brusque attack. "You know very well I sympathize with you, Barbara," she replied sharply. "But it's not good for you to be so sorry for yourself. What would Robert have said?"

Subsequently she had read Barbara's outpourings in the *Examiner*. The letter had been pathetic in its appeal for sympathy—but Miss Luxmoore thought the pseudonym of "Friendless" with which Barbara had signed it was a little unfair.

Still, Miss Luxmoore had reflected, perhaps after all if anybody troubled to answer the letter it might give Barbara a new interest and take her mind off these imaginary aches and pains and this unfounded feeling of being ill-used.

The following Friday she had scarcely got her foot through the doorway of Barbara's house on her daily visit before a copy of the *Examiner* was being waved in her face. "I told you so!" Barbara had beamed triumphantly.

And there, indeed, in the "Help One Another" column was a reply to "Friendless." Written over the pseudonym of "Comforter," it was, as Barbara was at pains to emphasize, most kind and sympathetic.

True, there was an occasional injunction to "bear up" and so on, but in the main it was as balm to a wounded heart. Barbara read it half a dozen times and then sat down to reply to it.

Thereafter the affair had become an intermittently regular correspondence—so much so, indeed, that other readers came to look for the "Friendless" and "Comforter" letters as an almost permanent feature of the column.

Whenever Miss Luxmoore had occasion to chide Barbara for any backsliding in the matter of "little illnesses," Barbara would invariably produce some cutting or other of a "Comforter" letter from the *Examiner*. Between them, Miss Luxmoore had her hands full.

The affair had, however, given Barbara a definite sort of occupation, and she had even seemed to achieve some measure of self-reliance—so much so that Miss Luxmoore had felt justified in taking that long-promised and often-deferred holiday.

IT had, of course, been a mistake. Perhaps worse. With the vision which the telegram had conjured up in her mind, Miss Luxmoore wondered indeed if it did not amount to a betrayal of the trust Robert had placed in her.

Barbara, without her friend there to keep her up to scratch, had probably relapsed into a quite hopeless state of self-pity and imagined herself into a quite serious illness.

The train drew up in Little Welton station just five minutes late. Chugg, she noted thankfully, was there with the car to meet her, and in ten minutes she was letting herself into her cottage.

A few minutes later she was hurrying across the meadow path to Barbara's house.

Barbara was able to speak, slowly and hestitantly—just a few words at a time.

"Missed you . . . Ruth," she whispered as Miss Luxmoore came quietly to her bedside in the train of the nurse who had opened the door. And then, after a pause, Barbara added with an altogether pitiful little air of triumph: "You see . . . Ruth . . . I *was* ill . . . all the time."

Miss Luxmoore tried to smile, while fiercely contesting that treacherous sentimentality which was doing its best to make her behave like a weak fool.

After a few minutes she saw that Barbara's hand was groping, and she put out her own.

It was taken in a hold whose feebleness shook Miss Luxmoore, and as she bent over the bed she caught the drift of Barbara's murmurings—broken attempts to express gratitude for her friend's years of kindness.

There was a confused reference, too, to "Comforter."

Miss Luxmore could just make out the name and some whispered rambling about a legacy. And then Barbara died, still holding her hand.

FOR the first time in years Miss Luxmoore's facade cracked and crumbled. She laid her face on the bed and cried like a child. She remembered Robert dying, and now Barbara—and she felt she had nothing left at all. Not even—and the thought brought another paroxysm of shamed sobbing—not even Robert's poem.

It was on the day of the funeral that she learned, from Barbara's lawyer, that her friend had made a will only three days before her death. After provision for some distant relations, she had left her house and the bulk of her money to Miss Luxmoore. But there was, it appeared, one curious bequest.

It concerned, the lawyer explained, a poem by his client's late husband. It seemed that Mrs. Harris cherished this poem very closely.

It was, so far as he had understood her, a truly warm and loving tribute—so much so that she had chosen it as the one most suitable thing in her possession to bequeath in gratitude to a pen-friend with whom she had corresponded for many months through the columns of the *Much Welton Examiner*.

Miss Luxmoore could not stifle a startled ejaculation, and she felt a flush of embarrassment heating her cheeks as she saw the lawyer's raised eyebrows.

The turmoil which his statement had aroused in her was so great that she heard herself stammering like a guilty schoolgirl as she tried to explain, to this dry man of the law, the streak of sentiment which had led to such a paradox; to explain to him that the poem was really for her; to describe, under his searching scrutiny, the hidden warmth of heart which had led her, while chiding her friend with one hand, into comforting her with the other; to confess, in short, that the pseudonym of "Comforter" concealed the identity of Miss Ruth Luxmoore.

THE HUMAN MACHINE by ROFFE THOMPSON

Tired Doing Nothing

THE other day I read a story that I think should be passed on to everyone.

A wealthy young woman felt so tired and listless that she wasn't interested in anything. Yet a physical examination revealed nothing wrong.

Her doctor—who knew the pampered life she led—advised her to find some kind of work to do. "But doctor," she protested indignantly, "how can you ask me to work when I'm so tired?"

"I know you're tired," he answered, "but if you'd only do something you could become tired *from*, there wouldn't be nearly so many things you'd be tired *of*."

If there ever was a tale with a moral for everyone, this is it. People who are bored with life are people who either haven't enough to do or are not really taking any interest in what they are doing.

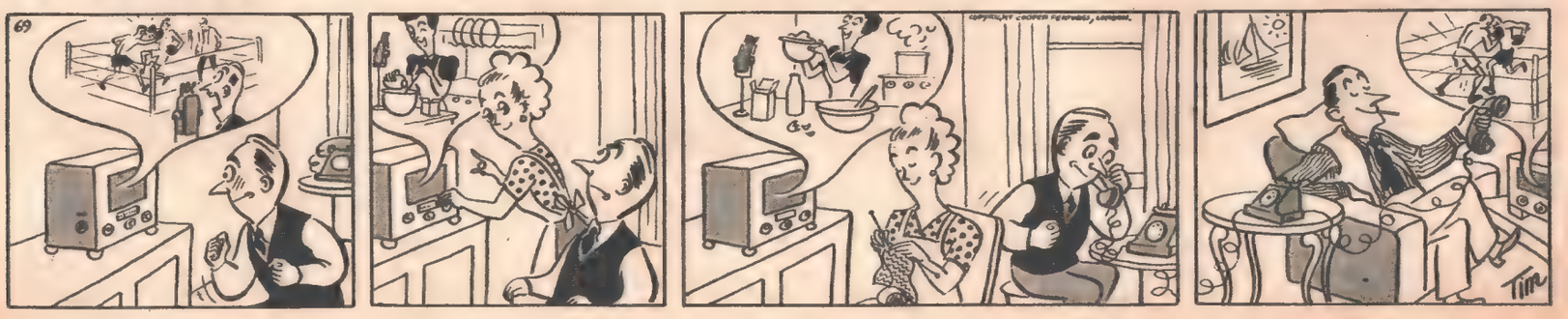
The future may be uncertain (when wasn't it?) but it would be a great deal more certain if everyone was cheerfully getting down to it, putting his back into it, pulling his weight, or whatever phrase you care to use to describe doing a job of work thoroughly and well.

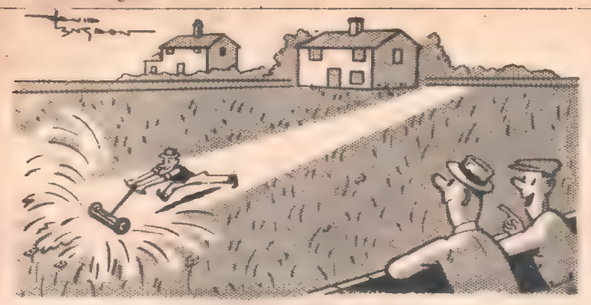
There are too many people today who just *aren't* doing that. They're getting steadily tired *of* things instead of becoming healthily tired *from* them.

Let me tell you a secret that, properly understood, can completely alter one's attitude to life. Time is a friend or an enemy according to whether one uses it or wastes it.

OH, JOHNNY!

by TIM





He must have

BISCUITS

to keep him going

Issued by The Cake & Biscuit Manufacturers (War Time) Alliance Ltd.

CVS-178

Avoid the Peaks!

Many more now have holidays with pay. They naturally want to travel—

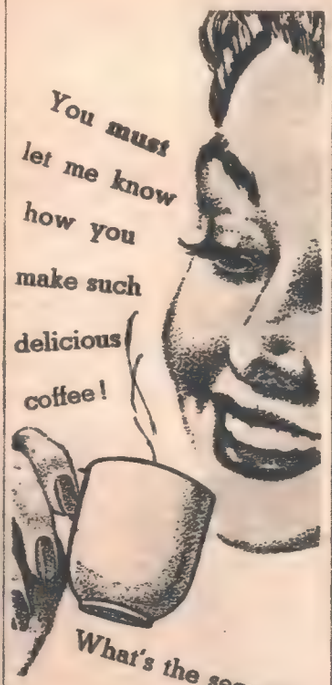
BUT

to enable coal to be saved for next winter the Government has ordered the train services to be cut by 10% compared with last summer.

This makes it more than ever necessary to avoid peak travel periods at week-ends whenever possible.

Travel Mid-week if you can

GWR · LMS **LNER · SR**



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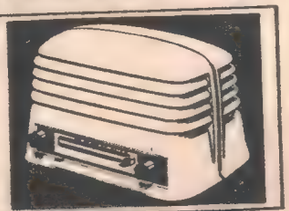

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A happy picture of Miss Lund with her husband, Alan, who is also her stage partner

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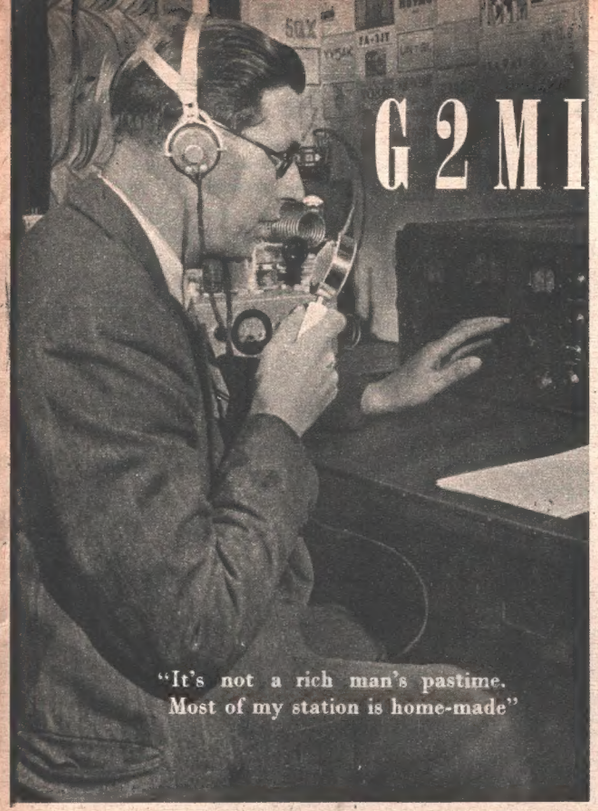

"It's not a rich man's pastime. Most of my station is home-made"

G2MI CALLING THE WORLD

Are you happy in your leisure?

John Bull is giving the stories of people with hobbies — people like Arthur Milne, the amateur radio operator. From a little room in his home in Bromley, Kent, he spends his spare time exchanging radio calls with fellow "hams" in Finland, East Africa or Russia

THE HOUSES IN KECHILL GARDENS, Bromley, are pretty much alike, but I didn't have much trouble finding the Milnes'. The sky over their roof was webbed with wire. The station call-sign, G2MI, was screwed under the "29" on the doorpost.

Geoffrey, Arthur Milne's eldest child, opened the door and took me to a little room off the hall. In most houses you'd have expected to find the coats, or perhaps the pram, there. But this room was lined with switches and dials and knobs. A pedestal microphone stood on a ledge. The whole thing put you in mind of one of those "Freedom Radio" films.

Arthur Milne was sitting in front of the microphone. Tall, horn-rimmed, breezy and thirty-nine years old, he's a telephone engineer during working hours; the rest of the time he's a husband, a father of three—and a ham.

Ham—in case you don't know—is international slang for amateur radio operator. The great thing about Milne's being a ham, his wife says, is that you always know where to find him.

She knows she'll find him in this little room off the hall, papered from floor to ceiling with hundreds of multi-coloured cards, some carrying flags, others maps, photographs, jaunty little drawings, back-slapping slogans. And all of them overprinted in big type with cabbalistic combinations of letters and figures—the amateurs' call-signs.

These are Q.S.L. cards, and Q.S.L. cards are an important part of the business of being a ham.

"Q.S.L." is "hamese" for "please send me confirmation" and the other fellow's Q.S.L. card is the confirmation a ham looks for after each new Q.S.O. (contact). And the Milnes are running Britain's "Q.S.L. Bureau"—the clearing-house for cards to and from Britain's radio amateurs. So, at the moment, they are handling 20,000 Q.S.L. cards a week, from all over the world.

Often that evening, as G2MI swopped frequencies and switched aerials, my eyes went roving over the brightly coloured cards on the wall, and each time I found some new remote place of the earth. Alaska. The Cocos Islands. The Hedjaz. China. Liechtenstein. The Virgin Islands. . . .

As the red Q.S.L. card of Robert L. Middleton, of Chicago, boasted: "Around the World, or Just Around the Corner, We Always Q.S.L."

When the bombing started Milne took some of the most treasured cards off the wall and made up an album, one card from each country contacted. The score to date is 129 countries, and the most treasured card comes from Lhasa—from Station AC4YN, run by a member of the British Mission to Tibet.

He turned a knob, pressed a switch, spun a dial. Voices began to pour into the little room. Beckenham calling Portuguese East Africa, a Scots voice from Finland making pawky jokes about whisky, a girl's clear voice in Italy.

Milne was giving me a running commentary: "This chap's in the Rhondda Valley. And this is a Dutchman. Let's see if we can raise the Dutchman. . . . G2MI calling Holland . . . G2MI, M for Mexico, I for Italy, calling Holland. . . ."

Like a necromancer's spell the slow Dutch voice rolled out of the loudspeaker. "This is PAOXZ calling G2MI, zis is Holland."

In the little room just off the hall in the house in Bromley, Kent, Arthur Milne replied with practised ease. "Good evening, old man. You're putting up a tremendous signal here. A tremendous signal. Would like to know where you are, what part of Holland you're in."

The Dutchman replied that we were putting in a very nice signal, too. "Talk somewhat slowly to me, if you will be so kind," he said. His name was Cor Swart and he was at Bennebroek, five miles south of Haarlem. We could hear his whispered asides in Dutch to his wife.

In Britain the ham spirit unites about five thousand licensed amateur operators in the invisible camaraderie of the ether.

For some weeks now G2MI in Bromley has been having a regular chat at 10.15 every night with W2PG—Clement Giberson, of Port Republic, New Jersey, U.S.A. One evening for some reason or other Giberson had missed the date and the Milnes had gone to bed.

At a quarter to twelve the phone bell rang. It was a Bournemouth ham on the wire to tell G2MI that W2PG was on the air, calling him on such and such a wavelength. And as Milne tuned in to Port Republic, twenty other trunk calls queued up, from amateur after amateur, all over the country, passing along the same message.

The ham spirit can be slightly frightening. . . .

Moscow Conversation Piece

My eye had been caught by one of the Q.S.L. cards in the middle of the wall. It had a picture of a soaring building crowned by a five-pointed red star. I asked Milne. He said, "Let's see," and switched over to the Morse key. He turned the dial. The room chirped with Morse. "That's UA3CA in Moscow." But Moscow was too busy talking to New Zealand to heed us.

"I've talked to hams all over Russia — in Tashkent, Baku, Azerbaidjan. They're generally pretty good operators. I correspond with two or three of them, including the chairman of the Moscow Radio Club, Ernst Krenkel. Politics? No Russian has ever tried to put any propaganda over to me. Only difference is their Q.S.L. cards are a bit more standardized."

The Iron Curtain, it seemed, hadn't a hope against the ham spirit. Geoffrey Milne came in with some coffee. To a layman, looking round this little room with the glowing dials, the coils, the rows of switches, the little flashing Neon tube, it looked very impressive.

Was being a ham one of those expensive hobbies?

"Most amateurs make their own stuff from junk," said Milne. "Everything you see here is home-made—except the receiver. You can build a transmitter and a receiver for £20—or you can spend £10,000 if you like. It certainly isn't a rich man's hobby. I was getting five shillings a week when I made my first transmitter."

It was nearly 10.15. Time for Arthur Milne's nightly chat with Clem Giberson in Port Republic, New Jersey.

He spun the dials. Music flooded into the room. A frown creased his forehead. "A sheer interloper," he muttered. "A broadcasting station. Got no business to be there at all."

The air was full of voices. Australia again. Finland. Northern Ireland. Stockholm. . . .

"Stockholm!" muttered G2MI disgustedly. "We don't want Stockholm on this waveband. At this time of night in Europe we consider only local."

Everybody Talks at Once

The loudspeaker gibbered madly. "You see what I mean about congestion? Conditions are crazy tonight," said Milne.

We could hear Clem Giberson's voice now, swelling and fading away to nothingness, then swelling again. The president and general secretary of the Radio Society of Great Britain were over there, too, lining up with other amateurs from all over the world to fight for a better allocation of wavelengths at the Atlantic City Conference. The amateurs want their prewar wavelengths back again.

But we still couldn't contact Port Republic, New Jersey. A bad night, mourned Milne. It always happened when somebody was there.

It was late. I had to get back. I left G2MI still sitting in the little room in front of the glowing dials, still searching for contact with W2PG of Port Republic, New Jersey. It was an extraordinary thing: from this ordinary room in this ordinary house in Kent we had been right into the homes of ordinary men in ordinary houses all over the world.

This way you could be next-door neighbour to Ivan Ivanovitch in Stalingrad, to Alberto Rossini in Milan, to Paul Pieters in Johannesburg. You could go right up to their firesides, get their slant on things, learn how they lived.

But the hams are not reporters, sociologists or economists. They are hams. The talk they send winging across the world is talk not of isms and economics, but of frequencies, signal strengths, interference—and, occasionally, of the weather.

They are citizens of the world, these hams, but it is science, not politics, that unites them.

"I reckon," says Arthur Milne, "we're about the only true democrats really, the only real internationalists. We don't care what a man's nationality is, or what his religion is, or what his colour is. All we care about is whether he's a good ham."

HENRY FIRTH

He won Health!

CONGRATULATIONS to reader Jack Jones, 53 Eighth Avenue, Bristol. For years his nerves had troubled him: now he has won back his health — and added a fair measure of wealth as well.

When on the sick list just over two years ago, this thirty-four years old wages clerk thought he would have a go at *Bullets*. "I have been entering without a break ever since then," he said, when congratulated on winning a £300 First Prize recently, "and I've stopped going to the doctor."

Help yourself to a prize *Bullets* tonic in this week's offer of 100 cheques. A few simple words on that coupon below can prove a First Prize prescription worth £300 to you!

RULES 1. First Prize to best *Bullet* received, others in order of merit —the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.
2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.
3. As entry-fee, enclose P.O. or stamps value 1s. for four *Bullets*, or value 6d. to cover two *Bullets*. Plain paper entries are allowed. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.
4. Entries accepted only on condition that results of this week's Contests in JOHN BULL dated Sept. 6, also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding.

How to make a *Bullet*

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* below. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet*.

100 CHEQUES

£300 INCREASED FIRST PRIZE

£25, £10

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1,500 "GOOD SHOTS"

Add 2, 3 or 4 Words to any of these "Examples"

PROSPERITY'S HARVEST
HARD WORK
BEVIN'S GOAL
FOOD COMES FIRST, SO
TO BRIGHTEN THE HOUSE
THE PLAIN FACT
ON THE PRODUCTION FRONT
MAD ENGLISHMAN
LOOKING AHEAD
WOULD BE WELCOME
QUEUES
NOW WE KNOW
SHIP IN DISTRESS
A CURSE
WITHOUT A PERMIT
WINNING
NOT A HOPE
GRANNY'S ADVICE
AS IT HAPPENED
WREATHED IN SMILES

Incomplete "Examples"—see instructions.

EVERYTHING WE.....
ONE MORE.....
SURE TO BE.....
HER IDEA OF.....
SOUNDED.....
WHAT A.....WHEN

ADDRESS ENTRY "BULLETS" 1,591 (or XWORD 543); "JOHN BULL," LONG ACRE, LONDON, W.C.2 (COMP.)

STICK 2½d. STAMP here and address this label if you want the help of *Bulletin and Gazette* dated Aug. 30 offering final **100 BIG CHEQUES**

404

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EXAMPLE

BULLET

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Closing Postmark.

1,591 MON., AUG. 18

I agree to Rules and enclose P.O.

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FIRST PRIZE, £250 plus Swiss Holiday: W. H. Dormer, 35 Dovehouse Fields, Lichfield:
Everybody's Right And Everybody's "Fight," Peace

SECOND PRIZE, £25 plus Seaside Holiday: D. Edmunds, 29 Gelli Street, Caerau, Bridgend: **Seaside Snapshot—From Yalta, "Fading" Somewhat.**

THIRD PRIZE, £10 plus Seaside Holiday: Miss N. Holme, 12 Leighton Street, Moston, Manchester, 10: **Wrecked Their Marriage—Other Lips? Other Noses!**

THREE PRIZES of £5 plus Seaside Holiday: W. G. Broyden, 174 Lower Road, Belvedere: **Not For Nothing—Russian "Enterprise" So "Private."** V. Tee, 41 Parham Road, Gosport: **Once They Were Allies, But—Now Block *Our* "Advances."** C. Trotter, 3 Afton Place, Dumbarton: **Smoke And Grime—*And* Roses—Lucky Me!**

SIX PRIZES of £2 10s.: A. Coker, The Oaks, Fyfield, Ongar: **Another Matter—Ploughing Back *Postal* Yield!** R. B. Hannant, 29 Green Lane, Portsmouth: **Wrecked Their Marriage—Both Busy "Rebuilding" *Britain*.** Mrs. N. E. Kemp, 33 Grove Road, Ramsgate: **Kept Afloat—Auntie—Heard "*Man* Overboard!"** T. W. Layton, 49 Smith Street, Warwick: **Ready To Be—"Brethren," But Where's "Joseph"?** H. Nixon, 63 Grange Park Road, St. Helens: **Wrecked Their Marriage — "Pinpricks"— Missing "Safety-pins."** A. Pursey, 471 Mile End Road, E.3: **Prices—Too High—Two Sigh!**

Holidays arranged by Cook's. Cheques, 50 Season Tickets and 1,500 other Awards have been posted.

TRY THIS £150 CROSSWORD!

Waiting to be won in this week's Crossword—£100 in First Prize cash, £25 cash for Runners-up and additional awards value £25!

Post your square below by MONDAY, August 18.

XWORD 539 RESULT

WINNING WORDS: ACROSS: 1, Law. 2, Sight. 6, Tie. 7, Exes. 11, Herring. 12, Dare. 14, Tooth. DOWN: 3, Game. 4, Track. 5, Reach. 8, Turn. 9, Aim. 10, Banker. 12, Dad. 13, Sot.

THREE £100 SHARERS: G. Butt, 44 Hallowell Road, Northwood; Mrs. M. J. Meakin, Albert Villa, Ashby Road, Moira, Burton-on-Trent; A. R. Wright, Sutton Cotts., Waltham, Canterbury. In addition, winners awarded 850-mile Coach Tour.

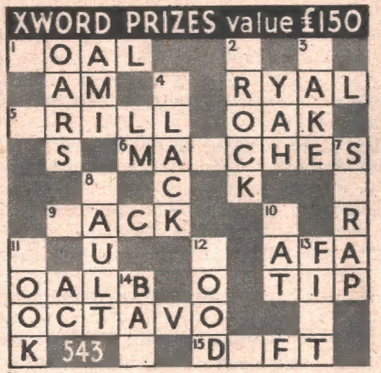
Runners-up Award (value £25) shared between 22 entrants. £25 Extra Holiday Cash shared amongst 18 prize-winners submitting 8 or more 3d. entries.

Across Clues **XWORD 543**

1. A certain accuracy and care are needed to shoot this properly
5. To get stone from quarry, it's often necessary to
6. In the old days, these were scene of many a miniature battle
9. Speed of this can vary somewhat
15. One might be inclined to describe man who hits bull as this

Down Clues

2. Hubby is apt to worry about expense if he sees wifey's becoming one
3. May be found to be too warm
4. It's a bad sign when a market is this
7. May make a boy hard
8. Easily escapes attention if beneath the surface
10. Life of one is often ended by being caught in field
11. There's probably a bust-up if one lets the cat out
12. Can provide a sort of screen
13. Doctor's often gives person a nasty jolt
14. Timing may considerably affect scoring of



HOW TO ENTER THIS COUPON

Complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues above. Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest, but extra Awards value £25 amongst prize-winners submitting eight or more 3d. entries. Signature below is agreement to Rules.

For this one Square send 6d. (P.O. or stamps), covering entry-fee and dispatch of *Crossword Gazette* dated August 30 for which enclose addressed *Bulletin and Gazette* Label without affixing stamp. If no *Gazette* required, your 6d. also covers second set of Answers on plain paper. Pencilled entries barred.

I enclose 6d. P.O.

No. ..... Closing Postmark. MON., AUG. 18

Signed **543**

Address .....

.....

WRITE TO JOHN BULL ABOUT IT

Our team of experts will solve your queries (except medical) if you send them to the John Bull Free Advice Service, 186 High Holborn, London, W.C.1. Domestic problems should be sent to "Humanist," at the same address. Stamp for reply, please

Neighbours' Weeds

"OUR NEXT-DOOR neighbours have allowed their garden to become so overriden with weeds and grass that this has now become a menace to our property. The gardens are separated only by an open-work trellis fence. It is taking me all my spare time to keep the weeds down. Will you tell me what legal steps I can take to put a stop to the nuisance?"

▶▶ Unless your garden is large enough to be considered as an agricultural holding, you cannot take any legal action regarding the weeds.

Tax on Pension

"MY FATHER WORKED for the corporation gasworks for forty-five years, and now he has retired several shillings are deducted every week from his superannuation and old age pension. Does a man over seventy have to pay income tax?"

▶▶ Yes, he pays like everyone else if his total income exceeds a certain sum. He is entitled to the usual deductions for earned income allowance and a married man's personal allowance.

Refund of Contributions

"THREE YEARS AGO I started doing part-time work of sixteen hours a week and paid health and unemployment insurance as a compulsory contributor. It took about a quarter of what I earned. Now I have received an unemployment card stamped up to date, informing me that I have no need to pay. Can I claim the return of the contributions?"

▶▶ As it has been decided that your employment is not insurable for unemployment insurance, you should apply for a refund of the contributions you have paid. The local employment exchange will give you a claim form on request.

Pension and Dole

"I AM IN RECEIPT of a small Colonial pension and may become redundant in my present employment. Can I draw the 'dole' if I am discharged?"

▶▶ The fact that you have a small Colonial pension will not affect the allowance of unemployment benefit. You will, of course, have to satisfy the normal conditions for unemployment benefit.

Widow's Smallholding

"FOR FIFTY YEARS my husband occupied a smallholding. Now he has passed away, but I want to continue living here. My daughter lives with me. Can she be compelled to quit when I die?"

▶▶ If you have more than two acres of land in the holding you cannot be given notice to quit except with the consent of the Minister of Agriculture. Your daughter appears to be entitled to succeed to the tenancy on your death.

National Health Benefit

"I AM AN EX-SERVICEMAN, drawing a disability pension, and am now in a sanatorium. I applied for National Health benefit and was informed that I could not claim while in the sanatorium, but that benefit could be paid to my father on my behalf. I find that my father is receiving only 10s. a week. Can you let me know how much I ought to be paid weekly, and whether I can claim full allowance with back pay? I need money to repay a debt."

▶▶ National Health Insurance benefit is not payable to you while you are in the sanatorium, but it can be paid, at the discretion of your approved society, to a dependant, for extra comforts or in payment of expenses which you incurred while in the sanatorium. The allowance of any benefit is decided by the approved society. The balance of any payment for these purposes is payable to you when you return home, subject to a maximum of £50.

Public Halls

"OUR LOCAL development committee holds its meetings in a public hall. Can you tell me if private meetings can be held in a public hall? Can members of the public attend if they so wish?"

▶▶ It is quite usual for private meetings to be held in a public hall. Unless you are a member of the committee, or are invited to attend, you cannot do so.

HOW EXPERT WERE YOU?

Answers to Quiz on page 16

SINGERS. (1) Melba. (2) The Pope. (3) Al Jolson's; another actor played the part. (4) Paul Robeson. (5) Richard Tauber.

DOGS. (1) It was used in bull baiting. (2) The poodle. (3) Two and a half million (2,623,931 in 1944-45). (4) Yes, nose-prints and paw-prints are both used. (5) In Australia, where the dingo (a kind of dog) is a pest and a bounty is paid for each one destroyed.

BUSINESS. (1) Refer to drawer (usually when it cannot be met). (2) Liability; that of the shareholders is limited to the nominal value of their shares. (3) One who sells stock for future delivery, speculating on a fall in price meanwhile. (4) Percentage paid by purchaser of stock for postponement of transfer. (5) Yes; a trust is an amalgamation of companies under unified control; a cartel is merely an association of firms keeping a considerable degree of independence.

MATERIALS. (1) Dried West Indian berry, for spicy flavouring. (2) Plumbago, or graphite, is a soft form of carbon occurring naturally and used for pencils, stove polish and as a lubricant; it is also the name of a plant. (3) Syrup drained from raw sugar, eaten as treacle. (4) Dried coconut kernels, yielding coconut oil which is largely used for margarine. (5) Waxlike substance found in sperm whales or floating in tropical seas, used in making perfumes.

DRINKS. (1) From the oak casks in which it matures after being distilled, but burnt sugar is sometimes used to deepen the colour. (2) It is made from dark grapes whose skins are left in long enough to colour the wine. (3) From the Alto Douro, a district of Portugal round the port of Oporto, from which it takes its name. (4) More hops. (5) Curaçao.

SEPTEMBER 1

Take action to avoid COLDS

It would indeed be pleasant to assure you that a course of Serocalcin is a guarantee that you will not have a cold during the winter. Unfortunately such an assurance is impossible because there is no absolutely certain way to escape colds.

But Serocalcin may help you. It has succeeded in thousands of cases. If you suffer from colds Serocalcin is well worth a trial.

PREVENTION OF COLDS

Two Serocalcin tablets are taken daily for 30 days. In many cases this gives 3 to 4 months immunity from colds.

TREATMENT OF AN EXISTING COLD

Three tablets are taken three times daily. Commenced in the early stages of a cold this often clears up the attack in two or three days. Serocalcin is suitable both for adults and children.

The immunising course of 60 Serocalcin tablets costs 8/5½d. Treatment pack of 20 tablets—3/4½d.

All who suffer from colds are invited to send to Harwoods Laboratories Ltd., Watford, for descriptive booklet "Immunity from Colds."

SEPTEMBER 1

Take SEROCALCIN

Regd.

FOR THE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF COLDS

Mr Jaded

Mr Jolly

Eno's 'Fruit Salt'

for cheerful livers

2/-and 3/6 a bottle (tax inc.)

The picture of the year

And it's "gilt-edged", too — the new National Savings Certificate. It's yours for ten bob. And it becomes 13/- in ten years — an increase of 30% *free of tax*. Buy these Certificates — there's profit in them! More than that, there's the peace of mind you get, knowing that you're tucking some money safely away into Savings. Go on with the good work! *Go on buying Savings Certificates.* Every Certificate you buy helps the Silver Lining Campaign.

Issued by the National Savings Committee

watch her pretty lips
reveal a dazzling sight
she uses Solidox
to keep her teeth so white

SOLIDOX

TEETH WHITER—SMILES BRIGHTER

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SOL/130/061

HOW TO MAKE YOUR CIGARETTES *last longer!*

All air in cell is quickly burned up—cigarettes must go out!

Cigarette smokers! With this amazing new Ronson Ashtray you can maintain your cigarette enjoyment without extra expense, despite the Budget.

If your smoking is interrupted, don't lay your cigarette down and let it burn away—drop it into the Ronson Safety Ashtray WITHOUT STUBBING and it is out at once.

When you want another smoke, your cigarette is ready to light up again without unpleasant taste.

A Ronson Ashtray costs you less than the Budget increase on 6 packets of 20.

The patent rim prevents cigarettes from falling out of the Ronson Ashtray — prevents burns to furniture and carpets — guards against fires.

RONSON FIRE PREVENTION *Ashtray*

Backache

"I don't worry I take Doan's."

KEEP yourself well and fit for work. Nobody can afford to be handicapped and made miserable by backache, lumbago, stiff, aching joints, rheumatic pains, urinary and bladder disorders, gravel or any symptoms of sluggish kidney action.

Doan's Backache Kidney Pills bring welcome relief from these ailments by helping to cleanse sluggish kidneys, so that they are able to filter from the blood the harmful impurities which so often cause pain and discomfort.

"I wish I had taken Doan's Pills earlier," "Now I keep free from rheumatic pains and urinary disorders," "My back does not bother me," are typical of thousands of statements made by grateful users.

1/5, 3/5, 5/8. Ask your Chemist for

DOAN'S Backache Kidney Pills

The sure way to build up a bird

SPRATT'S SPECIAL CANARY MIXTURE 2/6

For your bird's fitness and condition ask your dealer for SPRATT'S Bird Seeds and Foods which include:

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THIS ACTUALLY HAPPENED

At 30 m.p.h. she opened car door in mistake for window, fell into road, sustained bad, dirt-imbedded wounds on hands, knee, thigh and foot. Patrol man gave First Aid with T.C.P., which she continued to use at home. Result:-all wounds healed perfectly, with hardly a mark. *(Original letter on files at T.C.P. Laboratories).*

T.C.P. Regd.

You can use this really safe, soothing, healing antiseptic for 44 everyday hurts and ailments. So save money — buy the large bottle. It contains 4 times the quantity in the 1/3 size, costs only 3/- (Pur. Tax extra).

Bob Martin's will keep your dog fit

Does your dog enjoy summer as he should? Or does it mean for him listlessness, continual painful scratching, and loss of appetite? If it does, you can be sure his blood is out of order. Impurities have accumulated in his bloodstream, and sudden warm weather aggravates his troubles, poor dog.

The remedy? Regular conditioning. One Bob Martin's once a day will guard against summer upsets and keep him always fit, lively, and a splendid companion. Bob Martin's Condition Powder Tablets cost 7d. for 9, 1/6d. for a carton of 27.

and free from warm weather disorders

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A spellbinding lovely with starry eyes . . .

BUT SHE CAN'T BE BEAUTIFUL WITHOUT BEAUTIFUL HAIR

ISN'T she irresistible in her lace-covered straw adorned with a soft, flattering rose? But her real beauty's hidden beneath that headpiece, for her glossy, nut-brown hair, shampooed regularly with Icilma, shines with health and vitality. A lovely shampoo, it lathers richly, rinses out easily, and brings out the natural lights and colour tones in your hair because it cleanses the scalp as well. That's why it's so good for your hair!

Keep your hair Icilma-lovely with

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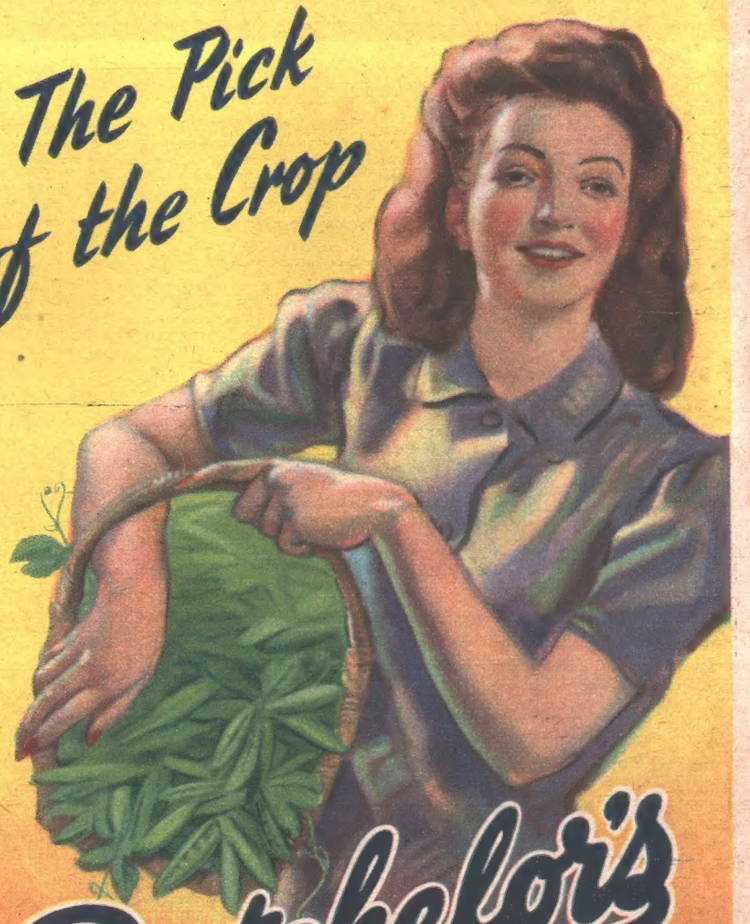
SHAMPOO

with Special Rinse—price 4d

WHEN YOU HAVEN'T TIME OR HOT WATER FOR A WET SHAMPOO, USE THE CONVENIENT ICILMA HAIR POWDER

ICS 119C-76 ICILMA CO. LTD., ISLEWORTH, MIDDLESEX

The Pick of the Crop



Batchelor's REGD. Peas

Popular favourites for nearly 30 years, Batchelor's Peas are coming back to the shops in greater quantities, although the supply is unfortunately less than the demand.

Be sure to ask, too, for Batchelor's Fruits, Vegetables and Soups. You'll relish their delicious flavour and nourishment — a happy choice for luncheon or dinner.

"IT'S THE *flavour* THAT'S IN FAVOUR"